THE

CHRISTIAN HERO:

AN

ARGUMENT

PROVING THAT NO

PRINCIPLES

BUT THOSE OF

RELIGION

ARE SUFFICIENT TO MAKE A

GREAT MAN.

Written by Mr STEELE.

——*Fragili quærens illidere dentem*
Offendet solido —— Ho.

A NEW EDITION.

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M DCC XCII.

TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

LORD CUTTS,

Colonel of His MAJESTY's Coldſtream Regiment of Guards, &c.

MY LORD,

THE addreſs of the following papers is ſo very much due to your Lordſhip, that they are but a mere report of what has paſt upon my guard to my Commander, for they were writ upon duty, when the mind was perfectly diſengaged, and at leiſure in the ſilent watch of the night, to run over the buſy dream of the day; and the vigilence which obliges us to ſuppoſe an enemy always near us, has awakened a ſenſe that there is a reſtleſs and ſubtle one which conſtantly attends our ſteps, and meditates our ruin.

Thoughts of this nature, a man may with freedom acknowledge to your Lordſhip, who have ever been ſo far from running into the faſhionable vice of exploding religion, that your early valour firſt appeared againſt the profeſſed enemies of chriſtianity; and Buda had tranſmitted you to late poſterity, but that you yourſelf have obliterated your part in that glorious ſcene by the freſher memory of you, at Limerick and Namure.

With one honeſt purpoſe of life, and conſtant ſervice of one intereſt, and one cauſe, in what country have you not fought? in what field have you not bled? but I know I here offend you, nor will you allow warmth in commendation to be like a friend; but if, my Lord, to ſpeak you generous, honeſt, and brave be not ſo, I do aſſure you it is the only thing I will ever do in common with your enemies.

I ſaid your enemies, but if there are any who have ignorance or malice enough to be ſuch, their little hates muſt be loſt in the diſtinction the better world allow you, and that county (whoſe diſcerning is refined by a learned and elegant univerſity) has done you ſo great an honour, in making you unanimouſly their repreſentative in parliament, that they who would oppoſe your reputation, do but confeſs they are unacquainted with what paſſes in the world, and ſtrangers to the reſidence of knowledge and virtue.

It was there you received thoſe rudiments of honour, which have rendered your life conſpicuous enough to make you appear a worthy deſcendant of an ancient and diſtinguiſhed family, which has ſerved the crown in the moſt eminent ſtations, and been equally favourites of their country; it was there you received thoſe impreſſions which inſpire that true uſe of your being, which, ſo juſtly divides your time, between labour and diverſion, that the one does but recreate for the other, and which give a generous contempt of both, when they come in competition with the ſervice of that country which you love, and that God whom you worſhip.

Go on, my Lord, thus to contemn, and thus to enjoy life; and if ſome great Engliſh day does not call for that ſacrifice, which you are always ready to offer, may

may you in a mature age go to ſleep with your anceſtors, in expectation not of an imaginary fame, but a real immortality.

As for the preſent I now make you, if you will accept it with your uſual goodneſs and affection to me, I ſhall entertain no further hopes; for as your favour is my fortune, ſo your approbation is my fame.

I am,

My Lord,

Your Lordſhip's

Moſt obedient, moſt faithful

And moſt humble ſervant,

Tower-Guard,
March 23. 1701.

RICHARD STEELE.

PREFACE.

THE world is divided between two ſorts of people, the men of wit and the men of buſineſs, and theſe two have it wholly in their power; but however mighty the latter may eſteem themſelves, they have much the leſs ſhare in the government of mankind, and till they can keep the others out of company as well as employment, they will have an almoſt irreſiſtable dominion over us: for their imagination is ſo very quick and lively, that in all they enjoy or poſſeſs, they have a reliſh highly ſuperior to that of ſlower men; which fine ſenſe of things they can communicate to others in ſo prevailing a manner, that they give and take away what impreſſions they pleaſe; for while the man of wit ſpeaks, he beſtows upon his hearers, by an apt repreſentation of his thoughts, all the happineſs and pleaſure of being ſuch as he is, and quickens our heavier life into joys we ſhould never of ourſelves have taſted, ſo that we are for our own ſakes his ſlaves and followers: but indeed they generally uſe this charming force with the utmoſt tyranny, and as it is too much in their power, miſplace our love, our hatred, our deſires, and averſions, on improper objects; ſo that when we are left to ourſelves, we find truth diſcoloured to us, and they of faculties above us have wrapt things, in their own nature of a dark and horrid aſpect, in ſo bright a diſguiſe, that they have ſtamped a kind of praiſe and gallantry on ſome vices, and half perſuaded us that a whore may be ſtill a beauty, and an adulterer no villain.

Theſe

Theſe ills are ſupported by the arbitrary ſway of legiſlative ridicule, while by, I know not what pedantry of good breeding, converſation is confined to indifferent, low, or perhaps vicious ſubjects; and all that is ſerious, good, or great, almoſt baniſhed the world: for in imitation of thoſe we have mentioned, there daily ariſe ſo many pretenders to do miſchief, that what ſeemed at firſt but a conſpiracy, is now a general inſurrection againſt virtue; and when they who really have wit lead the way, it is hardly to be prevented, but that they muſt be followed by a crowd who would be ſuch, and make what ſhift they can to appear ſo, by helping one defect with another, and ſupplying want of wit with want of grace, and want of reputation with want of ſhame

Thus are men hurried away in the proſecution of mean and ſenſual deſires, and inſtead of employing their paſſions in the ſervice of life, they ſpend their life in the ſervice of their paſſions; yet though it is a truth very little received, that virtue is its own reward, it is ſurely an undeniable one, that vice is its own puniſhment; for when we have given our appetites a looſe rein, we are immediately præcipitated by them into unbounded and endleſs wiſhes, while we repine at our fortune, if its narrowneſs curbs them, though the gratifications of them were a kindneſs, like the indulgence of a man's thirſt in a dropſy; but this diſtemper of mind is never to be remedied, till men will more unreſervedly attempt the work, and will reſolve to value themſelves rather upon a ſtrong reaſon to allay their paſſions, than a fine imagination to raiſe them.

For if we beſt judge of things when we are not actually engaged and concerned in them, every man's own

own experience muſt inform him, that both the pleaſures we follow, and the ſorrows we ſhun, are in nature very different from what we conceive them, when we obſerve that paſt enjoyments are anxious, paſt ſufferings pleaſing in the reflection; and ſince the memory of the one makes us apprehend our ſtrength, the other our weakneſs, it is an argument of a trivial mind to prefer the ſatisfactions that lead to inquietude before pains that lead to tranquility.

But if that conſiſts (as it certainly does) in the mind's enjoyment of truth, the moſt vexatious circumſtance of its anguiſh, is that of being in doubt; from which men, will find but a very ſhort relief if they draw it from the collections or obſervations of ſedentary men, who have been called wiſe for propoſing rules of active life, which they cannot be ſuppoſed to underſtand: for between the arrogant and fanatic indolence of ſome, and the falſe and pleaſurable felicity of others (which are equally chimæra's) a man is ſo utterly divided, that the happineſs of philoſophers appears as fantaſtic as the miſery of lovers.

We ſhall not, it is hoped, be underſtood by ſaying this, to imagine that there is a ſufficient force in the ſhort following eſſay, to ſtem the univerſal and deſtructive torrent of error and pleaſure; it is ſufficient if we can ſtand without being carried away with it, and we ſhall very willingly reſign the glory of an oppoſition, if we can enjoy the ſafety of a defence; and as it was at firſt attempted to diſengage my own mind from deceiving appearances, ſo it can be publiſhed for no other end, but to ſet others a thinking with the ſame inclination: which whoever will pleaſe to do, will make a much better argument for

his own private uſe, than any body elſe can for him: for ill habits of the mind, no more than thoſe of the body, are cured by the patients approbation of the medicine, except he'll reſolve to take it; and if my fellow ſoldiers (to whoſe ſervice more eſpecially I would direct my thoughts I were capable of) would form to themſelves, (if any do not) a conſtant reaſon of their actions, they would find themſelves better prepared for all the viciſſitudes they are to meet with, when inſtead of the changeable heat of mere courage and blood, they acted upon the firm motives of duty, valour, and conſtancy of ſoul.

For (however they are diſ-eſteemed by ſome unthinking, not to ſay ungrateful men) to profeſs arms, is to profeſs being ready to die for others; nor is it an ordinary ſtruggle between reaſon, ſenſe, and paſſion, that can raiſe men to a calm and ready negligence of life, and animate them to aſſault without fear, purſue without cruelty, and ſtab without hatred.

But virtuous principles muſt infallibly be not only better than any other we can embrace, to warm us to great attempts, but alſo to make our days in their ordinary paſſage ſlide away agreeably: for as nothing is more daring than truth, ſo there is nothing more cheerful than innocence; and indeed I need not have been beholden to the experience of a various life to have been convinced, that true happineſs is not to be found but where I at preſent place it; for I was long ago informed where only it was to be had, by the reverend Dr Ellis, my ever honoured tutor; which great obligation I could not but mention, though my gratitude to him is perhaps an accuſation of myſelf

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who ſhall appear to have ſo little profited by the inſtitution of ſo ſolid and excellent a writer, though he is above the temptation of (what is always in his power) being famous.

THE CHRISTIAN HERO:

OR,

No Principles but thoſe of

RELIGION

SUFFICIENT TO MAKE A

GREAT MAN.

IT is certainly the moſt uſeful taſk we can poſſibly undertake, to reſcue our minds from the prejudice with which a falſe and unreaſonable fondneſs of ourſelves has enſlaved us. But the examination of our own boſoms is ſo ungrateful an exerciſe, that we are forced upon a thouſand little arts, to lull ourſelves into an imperfect tranquility, which we might obtain ſincere and uninterrupted, if we had courage enough to look at the ghaſtly part of our condition: but we are ſtill flatterers to ourſelves, and hypocrites the wrong way, by chuſing, inſtead of the ſolid ſatisfaction of innocence and truth, the returning pangs of conſcience, and working out our damnation as we are taught to do our happineſs, "with fear and trembling."

But this misfortune we owe, as we do moſt others, to an unjuſt education, by which we are inſpired with

with an ambition of acquiring ſuch modes and accompliſhments, as rather enable us to give pleaſure and entertainment to others, than ſatisfaction and quiet to ourſelves: ſo phantaſtical are we as to dreſs for a ball when we are to ſet out on a journey, and upon change of weather, are juſtly derided, not pitied by the beholders. How then ſhall we prepare for the unaccountable road of life, when we know not how long or how ſhort it will prove, or what accidents we ſhall meet in our paſſage? Can we take any thing with us that can make us cheerful, ready and prepared for all occaſions, and can ſupport us againſt all encounters? Yes, we may (if we would receive it) a confidence in God. Yet, leſt this be impoſed upon men by a blind force of cuſtom, or the artifice of ſuch perſons whoſe intereſt perhaps it may be to obtrude upon our mirth, and our gaiety, and give us a melancholy proſpect (as ſome men would perſuade us) to maintain themſelves in the luxury they deny us; let us not be frighted from the liberal uſe of our ſenſes, or meanly reſign our preſent opinions, till we are convinced from our own reflection alſo, that there is ſomething in that opinion which can make us leſs inſolent in joy, leſs depreſſed in adverſity, than the methods we are already engaged in. And indeed the chief cauſe of irreſolution in either ſtate, muſt proceed from the want of an adequate motive to our actions, that can render men dauntleſs and invincible both to pleaſure and pain.

It were not then, methinks, an uſeleſs enquiry to ſearch into the reaſon that we are ſo willing to arm ourſelves againſt the aſſaults of delight and ſorrow, rather with the dictates of morality than thoſe of religion; and how it has obtained, that when we ſay a thing

thing was done like an old Roman, we have a generous and ſublime idea, that warms and kindles in us, together with a certain ſelf-diſdain, a deſire of imitation; when, on the other ſide, to ſay, It was like a primitive Chriſtian, chills ambition, and ſeldom riſes to more than the cold approbation of a duty that perhaps a man wiſhes he were not obliged to. Or, in a word, Why is it that the Heathen ſtruts, and the Chriſtian ſneaks in our imagination? If it be as Machiavil ſays, That religion throws our minds below noble and hazardous purſuits, then its followers are ſlaves and cowards; but if it gives a more hardy and aſpiring genious than the world before knew, then he, and all our fine obſervers, who have been pleaſed to give us only heathen portraitures, to ſay no worſe, have robbed their pens of characters the moſt truly gallant and heroic that ever appeared to mankind.

About the time the world received the beſt news it ever heard, The men whoſe actions and fortunes are moſt pompouſly arrayed in ſtory, had juſt acted or were then performing their parts, as if it had been the deſign of providence to prepoſſeſs at that time, after a more ſingular manner than ordinary, the minds of men, with the trappings and furniture of glory and riches, to heighten the virtue and magnanimity of thoſe who were to oppoſe them all, by paſſing through wants, miſeries, and diſgraces; and indeed the ſhining actions of theſe illuſtrious men do yet glare ſo much in our faces, that we loſe our way by following a falſe fire, which well conſidered is but the deluſive vapour of the earth, when we might enjoy the leading conſtant light of heaven.

To make therefore a juſt judgment in our conduct,

duct, let us consider two or three of the most eminent Heathen, and observe whether they, or we, are better appointed for the hard and weary march of human life; for which examination we will not look into the closets of men of reflection and retirement, but into the practice and resolution of those of action and enterprize. There were never persons more conspicuously of this latter sort, than those concerned in the fortunes and death of Cæsar; and since the pulse of man then beat at the highest, we will think it sufficient to our purpose carefully to review him, and them, as they march by us, and if we can see any apparent defect in their armour, find out some way to mend it in our own. But it will require all our patience, by taking notice of the minutest things, to come at (what is absolutely necessary to us) the recesses of their hearts, and folds of their tempers.

Sallust has transmitted to us two very great, but very different personages, Cæsar and Cato, and placed them together in the most judicious manner for appearing to advantage, by the alternate light and shade of each other: Cæsar's bounty, magnificence, popular and sumptuous entertainments stole an universal affection; Cato's parsimony, integrity, austere and rigid behaviour, commanded as universal reverence: none could do an ungentile thing before Cæsar, none a loose one before Cato: to one it was recommendation enough to be miserable, to the other to be good: to Cæsar all faults were pardonable, to Cato none: one gave, obliged, pitied, and succoured indifferently; the other blamed, opposed, and condemned impartially: Cæsar was the refuge of the unhappy, Cato the bane of the wicked: Cato had rather be than seem good; Cæsar was careless of either

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her, but as it ſerved his intereſts: Cato's ſword was he ſword of juſtice, Cæſars that of ambition: Cæar had an excellent common ſenſe and right judgnent of occaſion, time, and place; the other blunt nan underſtood not application, knew how to be in he right, but was generally ſo, out of ſeaſon: Cæar's manner made even his vice charming, Cato's ven his virtue diſagreeable: Cæſar inſinuated ill, Cato intruded good: Cæſar in his ſayings, his acions, and his writings, was the firſt and happieſt of ll men: in his diſcourſe he had a conſtant wit and ight reaſon; in his actions, gallantry and ſucceſs; n his writings, every thing that any author can preend to, and one which perhaps no man elſe ever had; he mentions himſelf with a good grace. Thus it was very natural for Cæſar, adorned with every art, maſter of every neceſſary quality, either for uſe or ornament, with a ſteady and well-placed induſtry to out-run Cato, and all like him, who had none, and deſired none, but (an ever weak party) the good for his friends.

Now this ſort of men were Cæſar and Cato, and by theſe arts they arrived at that height, which has left one's name proverbial for a noble and princely nature, the others for an unmoved and inexorable honeſty: yet without following them through all the handſome incidents and paſſages of life, we may know them well enough in miniature, by beholding them only in their manner of dying: for in thoſe laſt minutes, the ſoul and body both collect all their force, either bravely to oppoſe the enemy, or gracefully receive the conqueror, death.

Cæſar, by a long tract of ſucceſſes, was now become apparent maſter of his country, but with a ſe-

curity that is natural to gallant men, heroically forgave the moſt inveterate of his oppoſers: now was he followed with applauſe, renown, and acclamation: his valour had ſubdued the bodies, his clemency the minds of his enemies: and how bleſſed muſt the earth be under his command, who ſeems to court dominion for no other end, but to indulge an inſatiable mind in the glorious pleaſures of beſtowing and forgiving? This was the figure Cæſar bore in the world's opinion, but not in Cato's. He was there a tyrant in ſpite of the gloſs of ſucceſs and of fortune, which could not create appearances bright enough to dazzle his eyes from ſeeing the traitor in the conqueror: he knew to give a man his own, as a bounty was but a more impudent robbery, and a wrong improved by the ſlavery of an obligation: he juſtly and generouſly diſdained that his fellow-citizen ſhould pretend to be his lord; to his honeſt mind a pardon was but a more arrogant inſult, nor could he bear the apprehenſion of ſeeing his equal inflict upon him a tyrannical forgiveneſs: what then muſt this unhappy good man do? whither ſhall oppreſſed virtue fly from ſlavery? From ſlavery? No. He is ſtill free lord of himſelf, and maſter of his paſſions; Cæſar is the captive, he is ſhackled, he is chained, and the numerous troops which he boaſts the companions of his triumphs, and his glories, are but ſo many witneſſes of his ſhame and confuſion, to whom he has by an open uſurpation manifeſted his broken faith, falſe profeſſion, and proſtituted honour. But how far this impreſſion of intrinſic glory and happineſs in ſincere, though diſtreſſed virtue, and the ſenſe of a wicked man's object, though proſperous condition (which Cato's philoſophy gave him) did avail

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n his afflicted hours; the reſolution he is going to ake will demonſtrate.

He had now at Utica freſh and ſhocking intelli- ence of the gathering adherents to his enemy, and ould read in his own company, the mere followers f fortune in their countenance, but obſerved it with negligent and undaunted air, concerned only for he fate of others, whoſe weak pity of themſelves nade them the objects of his compaſſion alſo. It vas viſible by a thouſand little officious things he id, he was reſolved to leave this bad world: for he pent the day, which he deſigned ſhould be his laſt, n a certain vanity of goodneſs: he conſulted, per- uaded, and diſpatched all he thought neceſſary for he ſafety of thoſe that were about him; which ſer- ices they received from him, whoſe intent they ſaw, with tears, and ſhame, and admiration.

He continued the whole evening this affected en- oyment of this friends anxiety for him, which he aiſed by ſet diſcourſes, and abated, or rather con- irmed by a ſtudied indifference, till he went to bed, where he read Plato's immortality, and gueſſes at a uture life: at laſt he enquired for his ſword, on pur- poſe miſ-laid by his ſon; they did not immediately ring it, which he ſeemed to take no notice of, but gain fell to his book: after his ſecond lecture, he gain wantd his ſword: their heſitation in letting him ave it, threw him into an unſeemly rage, and ex- poſtulation with his friends, whoſe obliging ſorrow with-held it: what has he done, what has he com- mitted, to be betrayed into the hands of his ene- my? Had Cato's wiſdom ſo far left him, that he muſt be diſarmed, like a ſlave and a madman? What had his ſon ſeen ſo indiſcreet in his father, that he

was not to be truſted with himſelf? to all this cruel and intemperate queſtion, he was anſwered with the humbleſt behaviour, tendereſt beſeeching, and deepeſt eſteem: they implored his ſtay amongſt them as their genius, their guardian, and benefactor; among the reſt, a fond ſlave was putting in his reſiſtance, and his affliction, for which he daſhed the poor fellow's teeth out with his fiſt, and forced out of the room his lamenting friends, with noiſe, and taunt, and tumult; a little while after had his hand, with which he ſtruck his ſervant, dreſſed, lay down, and was heard to ſnore; but ſure we may charitably enough believe, from all this unquiet carriage, that the ſleep was diſſembled, from which as ſoon as he awaked, he ſtabbed himſelf, and fell on the floor; his fall alarmed his wretched dependants, whoſe help he reſiſted by tearing open his own bowels, and ruſhing out of life with fury, rage, and indignation.

This was the applauded exit of that noble Roman, who is ſaid, with a ſuperior and invincible conſtancy, to have eluded the partiality of fortune, and eſcaped the incurſion upon the liberty of his country: it ſeems then, had he lived, his own had been loſt, and his calling himſelf ſtill free, and Cæſar the uſurper, a bond-man and ſlave, were but mere words; for his opinion of things was in reality ſtunned by ſucceſs, and he died diſappointed of the imaginary ſelf-exiſtence his own ſet of thoughts had promiſed him, by an action below the precepts of his philoſophy, and the conſtancy of his life.

Thus did Cato leave the world, for which indeed he was very unfit, in the hands of the moſt ſkilful man in it, who, at his entrance on its empire, excelled his paſt glorious life, by uſing with ſo much temper

er and moderation, what he had purchaſed with ſo much bloodſhed and violence: but we muſt leave, at preſent, this buſy and inceſſant mind to the meditation of levelling inacceſſable mountains, checking the courſe of the ocean, and correcting the periods of time; we muſt leave him employed in modeling the univerſe (now his own) in the ſecure enjoyment of a life hitherto led in illuſtrious hazards, and now every way ſafe, but where it is its beauty to ly open, to the treachery of his friends.

Among the many pretenders to that character, was Caſſius, an able and experienced ſoldier, bound to him by no leſs an obligation, than the giving him life and quarter in battle; he was of a dark, ſullen, and involved ſpirit, quick to receive, but ſlow to diſcover a diſtaſte; his anger never flew into his face, but deſcended to his heart, which rankled and preyed upon itſelf, and could not admit of compoſure, either from religion or philoſophy; but being a perfect epicurean, and fancying there were none, or if any, only lazy and ſupine deities, muſt neceſſarily terminate his hopes and fears in himſelf, and from his own arm expect all the good and evil of which his life was capable: this man, in his temper uneaſy, and piqued by a certain partiality of Cæſar's to his diſadvantage, could not ſatisfy a ſedate bloody humour by any leſs reparation than his ruin; and having a revengeful biaſs of mind, a ſhort memory of kindneſſes, and an indelible reſentment of wrongs, reſolved to cancel an odious benefit, by a pleaſing injury: to this determination he was prompted by the worſt only good quality a man can have, an undaunted courage, which fermented in him a reſtleſs and gnawing meditation of his enemy's, that is, his benefactor's

factor's death; a thought befitting the greatneſs of his ambition, and the largeneſs of his pernicious capacity; his capacity which conſiſted in a ſkilful diſſimulation of his faults; for being full of thoſe vices which nearly approach, and eaſily aſſume the reſemblance of virtue, and ſeldom throw a man into viſible and obvious follies, he ſo well accommodated his ill qualities, to the good ones of thoſe with whom he converſed, that he was very well with the beſt men by a ſimilitude of their manners; his avarice obtained the frugal; his ſpleen, and diſreliſh of joy, the ſober and abſtinate; his envy and hatred of ſuperiors, the aſſerters of public liberty: this conſiderable wretch, ſkilfully warmed and urged ſome of his own temper, whom he knew ready for any great miſchief, to pull down the overgrown Cæſar, and enſnared others by the ſpecious pretence of a ſincere love to his country, to meet all hazards for her recovery; theſe illuſtrious ruffians, who were indeed men of the moſt weight, and the boldeſt ſpirits of the Roman empire, deſigned to diſpatch him in the eye of all the world, in open ſenate; but neither their quality or accompliſhments were great enough to ſupport them in ſo nefarious an attempt, without there could be an expedient thought of, to give it a more ſacred eſteem, than any of their characters could inſpire: it was therefore neceſſary to make Marcus Brutus of the conſpiracy.

This gentleman poſſeſſed the very boſom of Cæſar, who having had a notorious intrigue with his mother, was believed to have thought him his ſon, but whether that, or an admiration of his virtue, was the cauſe of his fondneſs, he had ſo tender a regard for him, that at the battle of Pharſalia, he gave it in orders

lers to the whole army, if he would not take quarter, to let him eſcape: he was, like Cæſar, addicted to letters and arms, and though not equal to him in his capacity for either, above him in the uſe of both. He never drew his ſword but with a deſign to ſerve his country, nor ever read with any other purpoſe but to ſubdue his paſſions, ſo that he had from books rather an habit of life, than a faculty of ſpeech; in his thoughts as well as actions he was a ſtrict follower of honeſty and juſtice; all he ſaid, as well as all he did, ſeemed to flow from a public and unbiaſſed ſpirit: he had no occaſion for the powers of eloquence to be able to perſuade, for all men knew it was their intereſt to be of his mind; and he had before he ſpoke, that firſt point, the good will of all his audience, for every man's love of himſelf made him a lover of Brutus. He had this eminence without the leaſt taint of vanity, and a great fame ſeemed not ſo much the purſuit, as the conſequence of his actions; thus ſhould he do a thing which might be liable to exception, men would be more apt to ſuſpect their own judgment than his integrity, and believe whatever was the cauſe of the action, it muſt be a good one, ſince it moved him: and though a perfect love of mankind was the ſpring of all he acted, that human temper never threw him into facility, but ſince he knew an ungrounded compaſſion to one man, might be a cruelty to another, mere diſtreſſes without juſtice to plead for them, could never prevail upon him, but, all gentle as he was, he was impregnable to the moſt repeated importunity, even that of his own good nature.

Such was the renowned Brutus, and one would think a man who had no ill ambition to ſatisfy, no looſe

looſe paſſions to indulge, but whoſe life was a regular, eaſy, and ſedate motion, ſhould be in little temptation of falling into a plot; but ill men, where they cannot meet a convenient vice, can make uſe of a virtue to a baſe purpoſe.

He was lineally deſcended from the famous Brutus, that extinguiſhed the Tarquins, whoſe debauches and cruelties made a regale name in Rome as juſtly odious, as that of the Bruti venerable for the extirpation of it; and Cæſar had very lately, in the midſt of an abſolute and unlimited power, betrayed a fantaſtic ambition of being called king, which rendered him obnoxious to the malice of the conſpirators and the virtue of Brutus. This was the place where the magnanimity of that patriot ſeemed moſt acceſſable, for it was obvious, that he who wanted nothing elſe to ſpur him to glorious attempts, muſt be alſo animated by the memory of illuſtrious anceſtors, and not like narrow and degenerate ſpirits, be ſatisfied with the fantaſk of honour derived from others, from whom, without a ſimilitude of virtue, it is an unhappy diſtinction to deſcend.

Yet however hopeful this handle appeared, they could not ſo abruptly attempt upon his awful character, as immediately to purpoſe the murder to him, without ſome diſtant preparations of mind to receive it. There were therefore theſe words frequently dropt in his way, from unknown hands: Thou art no longer Brutus; thou art aſleep Brutus: and the like; by which artifice he grew very thoughtful and buſy with himſelf, about the purpoſe of theſe advertiſements; one of ſuch moments Caſſius took hold of, and opened to him the great deſign for the liberty of his country from Cæſar's uſurpation: there

here needed no more to make him do a thing, but is belief that it was juſt; he ſoon conſented that Cæſar deſerved to die, and ſince he did, to die by his and: gaining this perſonage, made all ripe for exe-ution, and Caſſius poſſeſſed a full ſatisfaction, in hat he had engaged a man in the attempt, who in he eyes of the people, inſtead of being ſullied by it, ould ſtamp a juſtice and authority upon the action; hoſe confirmed reputation was ſufficient to expiate murder, and conſecrate an aſſaſſination.

Yet though his juſtice made him readily conſent o Cæſar's death, his gratitude upon reflection ſhook is reſolution to act in it; all which conflict with imſelf we cannot view without the incident of Por-ia's ſtory.

This lady obſerved her huſband fall on a ſudden rom an eaſy, placid, and fond, into a troubled, ſhort nd diſtracted behaviour; ſhe ſaw his mind too much mployed for the conjugal endearments, and kind enderneſſes, in which ſhe was uſually happy, yet pon this obſervation grew neither jealous or ſullen, ut mourned his ſilence of his affliction to her with s deep a ſilence: this lady, I ſay, this noble Roman wife turned all her ſuſpicion upon herſelf, and mo-eſtly believed it was her incapacity for bearing ſo reat a ſecret, as that which diſcompoſed the ſtedfaſt Brutus, made him conceal from her an affliction, which he thought ſhe had a title to participate; and there-ore reſolved to know of herſelf, whether his ſecreſy was a wrong to her before ſhe would think it ſo; to make this experiment, ſhe gave herſelf a deep ſtab in the thigh, and thought if ſhe could bear that torture, ſhe could alſo that of a ſecret; the anguiſh and con-

cealment of her wound threw her into a fever, in that condition she thus spoke to her husband.

Vid. Mr Duke's translation of the life of Brutus.

"I, Brutus, being the daughter of Cato, was given to you in marriage, not like a concubine, to partake only of the common civilities of bed and board, but to bear a part in all your good and all your evil fortunes; and for my part when I look on you, I find no reason to repent this match; but from me, what evidence of my love, what satisfaction can you receive, if I may not share with you in your most hidden griefs, nor be admitted to any of your counsels, that require secrecy and trust; I know very well, that women seem to be of too weak a nature to be trusted with secrets, but certainly, Brutus, a virtuous Birth and education, and a conversation with the good and honourable, are of some force to the forming our manners, and strengthening our natural weakness; and I can boast that I am the daughter of Cato, and the wife of Brutus. In which two great titles, though before I put too little confidence, yet now I have tried myself, I find that even against grief and pain I am invincible."

She then told him what she had done, but it is not easy to represent the kind admiration such a discourse must give a husband, and the sweet transport that was drawn from their mutual affliction, is too delicate a touch of mind to be understood but by a Brutus and a Porcia. Yet though he was not too wise to be tender to his wife, when he had unbosomed himself, in spite of this last action, and a thousand nameless things, that occurred to his memory to soften

ten him, he left his illuſtrious heroin in her pains and her ſorrows, to purſue his public reſolutions. But he is gone, and ſhe can burſt into thoſe tears which the awe of his virtue had made her ſmother; for how, alas! ſhall the heart of woman receive ſo harſh a virtue, as to gratify her huſband's will, by conſenting to his ruin? How ſhall ſhe ſtruggle with her own weakneſs and his honour? But while ſhe lay in his boſom, ſhe learned all the gallantry of it, and when ſhe ponders his immortal fame, his generous juſtice, and Roman reſolution, her mind enlarges into a greatneſs, which ſurmounts her ſex, and her affection: when ſhe views him in the conſpicuous part of life, ſhe can bear, nay triumph in his loſs; but when ſhe reflects and remembers their tenderer hours, thus would he look, thus would he talk, ſuch was his geſture, mein, the mirth, the gaiety of the man ſhe loved, (which inſtances are more intimate objects of affection, than men's greater qualities) then ſhe is all woman, ſhe reſigns the great, but laments the agreeable man: Can then my Brutus leave me? can he leave theſe longing arms for fame? She has no juſt notion of any higher being to ſupport her wretched condition; but however her female infirmity made her languiſh, ſhe has ſtill conſtancy enough to keep a ſecret that concerns her huſband's reputation, though ſhe melts away in tears, and pines into death in contemplation of her ſufferings.

Such muſt have been the ſoliloquy of this memorable wife, who has left behind her an everlaſting argument, how far a generous treatment can make that tender ſex go even beyond the reſolution of man, when we allow that they are by nature formed to

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pity, love, and fear, and we with an impulſe to ambition, danger and adventure.

The world bore a gloom and heavy preſage of Cæſar's approaching fate. It is ſaid wild beaſts came into the moſt frequented parts of the city, apparitions in the ſtreets, unuſual illuminations, in the ſkies, and inauſpicious ſacrifices damped the hearts of all men, but the aſſaſſins, who with an incredible calm of mind expected the opportunity of ſatiating their vengeance in the blood of the uſurper; yet was not Caſſius himſelf wholly unconcerned, for though he was as great an atheiſt as any among us can pretend to be, he had the weakneſs and ſuperſtition at that time, to invoke a ſtatue of Pompey for his aſſiſtance. It is as obſervable, that Cæſar, the evening before his fate, in a ſupper converſation (at one of his murderer's houſes) on the ſubject of death, pronounced a ſudden one to be the moſt deſirable, and a little ſhogged with reiterated ill omens, and touched with the foreboding dreams and frights of a tender wife, reſolved to forbear going to the ſenate on the morning appointed for his execution; which difficulty D. Brutus undertook to get over; a gentleman ſo ſuperlatively excellent that way, that he could not only upon ſuch an occaſion appear compoſed, but alſo in very good humour; this ſneering ruffian rallied away his fears, and with a very good mein conducted his friend to his murder.

When he came into the ſenate they roſe to him, and with a pretended joint petition for a baniſhed man, the Aſſaſſians preſſed about him, as ſoon as he was ſeated: he ſeverally checked their importunity, but while they were thus employed, one of them gave the ſign by throwing his robe over his neck, another

her oppreſſed with the grandeur of the attempt, made at him an irreſolute paſs: he briſkly oppoſed the villain, and called him ſo; they all ruſhed on him with drawn poniards, ſtill he reſiſted till he ſaw Brutus coming on, then with a generous and diſdainful, reſignation, yielded to the ſtroke of a pardoned, obliged, and rewarded friend. But there are in England a race of men, who have this action in the moſt profeſſed veneration, and who ſpeciouſly miſcall the rancour, malice, and hatred of all happier and higher than themſelves, (which they have in common with Caſſius) gallantry of mind, diſdain of ſervitude, and paſſion for public good, which they pretend to with Brutus; and thus qualified with ill, ſet up for faction, buſineſs, and enmity to kings. But it is to be hoped theſe men only run round till they are giddy, and when all things turn too, fancy themſelves authors of the motion about them, and ſo take their virtigo for their force; for ſure they have a futile pretence to a good public ſpirit, who have an ill private one.

But there lies the mighty Cæſar, an eternal inſtance how much too generous and too believing thoſe unhappy princes are, who depend upon the tie of men's obligations to them, without having their opinions on their ſide; for nothing hinders a man's walking by the principles of his ſoul, but an opportunity to exert them; when that occurs, the ſecret enemy throws off his maſk, and draws his dagger.

Yet reflections of this nature are ſomewhat foreign to our purpoſe, we muſt therefore follow theſe bloody men, to a fate as violent as they gave their benefactor: for it was in providence to fruſtrate their counſels, by turning that virtue to their ruin, which they had

had enſnared for their protection. The fearleſs Bru
tus had too much clemency, to make this blow ſaf
by the execution of the neareſt adherents to Cæſar
his ſafety conſiſted in his unbiaſed mind and undaunt
ed reſolution, which would not let him ſtoop to th
taking away any life below that of the greateſt
mankind.

However, this injury was repaired to Cæſar, for h
was voted a god in the very place where he ceaſed t
be a man, which had been a good ſaving clauſe
could they have perſuaded his ſucceſſor Octavius alſo
to have been contented with omnipotence; bu
the young ſcholar was ſo much enamoured with thi
world, that he left his book to diſturb and rule it
and to compaſs his end, took upon him the hopefu
reſolution of ſparing no man, from a reflection, per
haps, that his uncle was ruined by mercy in his vic
tories.

But it is not our buſineſs, to fall into an hiſtorica
account of the various occurrences, which happene
in the war between the Cæſarian army and that o
the conſpirators, any farther than it is neceſſary fo
judging how far the principles they walked by wer
uſeful to them in their greateſt extremities: As Bru
tus, one evening, ſat penſive and revolving, the paſ
ſages of life, and the memory of Cæſar occurred t
him, now perhaps not as a traitor, a tyrant, or a uſurpe
but as one he loved and murdered; an apparition ap
peared (or he thought appeared to him) which tol
him he was his evil genius, and would meet him a
Philippi, to which he calmly anſwered, "I'll mee
"thee there:" But he communicated a ſad impreſ
ſion which this made upon him to Caſſius, who i
an epicurean manner gave him a ſuperficial comfor
b

y diſcourſes of the illuſions, our fancies, our dreams nd our ſorrows imprint upon the mind, and make n imaginary a real torment. Yet the night before he fatal battle, he enquired (in caſe of a defeat) his eſolution as to flight and death. To which Brutus: "When I was young, Caſſius, and unſkilful in affairs, I was engaged, I know not how, into an opinion of philoſophy, which made me accuſe Cato for killing himſelf, as thinking it an irreligious act againſt the gods, nor any ways valiant amongſt men, not to ſubmit to divine providence, nor be able fearleſsly to receive and undergo whatever ſhall happen; but to fly from it: but now in the midſt of dangers I am quite of another mind, for if providence ſhall not diſpoſe what I now undertake according to our wiſhes, I reſolve to try no farther hopes, nor make any more preparations for war, but will die contented with my fortune, for I already have given up my life to the ſervice of my country, on the Ides of March, and all the time that I lived ſince, has been with liberty and honour."

Vid. Mr Duke's tranſlation of the life of Brutus. Plut.

However gallant this ſpeech may ſeem at firſt ſight, t is upon reflection a very mean one; for he urges o manner of reaſon for his deſertion of the noble rinciple of reſignation to the divine will, but his angers and diſtreſſes, which indeed is no more than f he had plainly confeſſed, that all the ſchemes we an form to ourſelves in a compoſed and proſperous ondition, when we come to be oppreſſed with calamities, vaniſh from us, and are but the effects of uxuriant eaſe and good humour, and languiſh and die

die away with them: but to make this a fair deduction from his diſcourſe, let us impartially (but with tenderneſs and pity) look at him in his laſt pangs: at the battle of Philippi, Brutus commanded the right, Caſſius the left of the line: the firſt broke the oppoſite wing of the enemy, the ſecond was himſelf forced. But by a failure in their orders and intelligence, each was ignorant of the other's fortune; Brutus followed his blow, and his heat drove him too far before he thought of Caſſius, whom at laſt with a ſtrong detachment, he returns to relieve. His friend retreated to a riſing ground, to view and bewail the fate of their cauſe, and commanded an officer to obſerve that body marching towards him: the gentleman ſoon found them friends, and confidently rid in amongſt them; they as kindly encloſed him to enquire news: upon ſeeing this, the miſerable Caſſius concluded him taken by the enemy, and giving all for loſt, retired into a tent, where he was by his own order killed by a ſervant.

Here Brutus, whom neither the fondneſs of an excellent wife, obligations to a generous friend, or a meſſage from the dead could divert him from meeting all encounters, ſinks and falls into the moſt extreme deſpair.

He, with ſome others that eſcaped the purſuit, retired to a thicket of a wood, where alſo finding they were traced, it was propoſed ſtill to fly: but he, after having expreſſed a ſatisfaction (but a falſe one, ſince he could not live with it) in his integrity, which he preferred to the ſucceſſes of his enemies, ran upon his ſword, and transfixed that great heart with a ſuperfluous blow, which ſure was before ſtabbed with the killing reflection upon Et tu Brute?

Here

Here let us throw a veil over this miſtaken great man, and if poſſible cover him from human ſight for ever, that his ſeduced and ambiguous virtue may be no more profaned, as an umbrage to the counſels of perjured friends, ſacrilegious regicides, and implacable deſperadoes.

Now the uſe we make of theſe reflections, is, that ſince we have ſeen the mighty Cæſar himſelf fall into ſuperſtition at the thought of this exit, ſince Cato's firm conſtancy, Brutus his generous zeal, and Caſſius his ſteady malice, all ended in the ſame dereliction of themſelves, and deſpondence at laſt, we may juſtly conclude, that whatever law we may make to ourſelves, from the greatneſs of nature, or the principles of philoſophy, for the conduct and regulation of life, it is itſelf but an artificial paſſion, by which we vainly hope to ſubdue thoſe that are natural, and which will certainly riſe or fall with our diſappointment or ſucceſs, and we that are liable to both are highly concerned to be prepared for either: at which perfection there is no nearer way to arrive, but by attending our own make, and obſerving by what means human life, from its ſimple and rural happineſs, ſwelled into the weighty cares and diſtractions with which it is at preſent enchanted; and from this knowledge of our miſery, extract our ſatisfaction.

CHAP. II.

MAN is a creature of ſo mixed a compoſure, and of a frame ſo inconſiſtent and different from itſelf, that it eaſily ſpeaks his affinity to the higheſt and meaneſt beings; that is to ſay, he is made of body and ſoul, he is at once an engine and an engineer: tho' indeed both that body and ſoul act in many inſtances ſeparate and independent of each other: for when he thinks, reaſons, and concludes, he has not in all that work the leaſt aſſiſtance from his body: his fineſt fibres, pureſt blood, and higheſt ſpirits are as brute and diſtant from a capacity of thinking as his very bones; and the body is ſo mere a machine, that it hungers, thirſts, taſtes, and digeſts, without any exerted thought of the mind to command that operation: which when he obſerves upon himſelf, he may, without deriving it from vapour, fume, or diſtemper, believe that his ſoul may as well exiſt out of, as in that body from which it borrows nothing to make it capable of performing its moſt perfect functions. This may give him hopes, that though his trunk return to its native duſt, he may not all periſh, but the inhabitant of it may remove to another manſion; eſpecially ſince he knows only mechanically that they have, not demonſtratively how they have, even at preſent union.

And ſince this mind has a conſciouſneſs and ſuperior reflection upon its own being and actions, and that thoughts flow in upon it, from it knows not what ſource, it is not unnatural for it to conceive that there is ſomething of a nature like itſelf, which may imper-

imperceptibly, act upon it, and where it cannot deduce its reasonable performances from any corporeal beginning, draw hopes or fears from some being thus capable to impress pleasure or torment; which being it, cannot but suppose its author.

But this its author is incomprehensible to the soul (which he has thought fit to imprison in sense and matter) but as he is pleased to reveal himself, and bestow upon it an expectation of its enlargement; yet were we to take the account which poetical writers, give, and suppose a creature with these endowments wandering among other wild animals, the intelligent savage would not be contented with what rapine or craft could gain from his brethren beasts, but his condition would still be as necessitous for his better part; and his dark natural enquiry would make him, for want of a more just knowledge of his Creator, fall into superstition. and believe every fountain, grove and forest inhabited by some peculiar deity, that bestowed upon mankind the stream, the shade and the breeze.

But we are informed that the wonderful Creator of all things, after he had given the rivers to flow, the earth to bring forth, and the beasts to feed, saw and approved his work, but thought a dumb, brute, and mechanic world an imperfect creation, till inhabited by a conscious being, whose happiness should consist in obedience to, and a contemplation on, him and his wonders.

For this reason man was created with intellectual powers and higher faculties, who immediately beheld with joy and rapture, a world made for the support and admiration of his new being; how came he into this happy happy state! whence the order! the beau-

ty! the melody of this living garden! Are the trees verdent? Do the birds ſing? Do the fountains flow for no other reaſon but to delight and entertain him? How does he paſs through the moſt bright and delicious objects, and how does he burn to utter himſelf upon the extatic motions which they give him! in ſuch ſweet inquietude were the firſt hours of the world ſpent, and in this laſſitude of bliſs and thought our parent fell into a profound ſleep, when his Maker, who knew how irkſome a lonely happineſs was to a ſociable nature, formed out of his ſide a companion, woman: he awaked, and by a ſecret ſympathy beheld his wife: he beheld his own rougher make ſoftened into ſweetneſs, and tempered into ſmiles: he ſaw a creature (who had as it were heaven's ſecond thought in her formation) to whom he could communicate his conceptions, on whom he could glut his eyes, with whom he could raviſh his heart: over this conſort his ſtrength and wiſdom claimed, but his affection reſigned the ſuperiority: theſe both equal and both ſuperior were to live in perfect tranquility, and produce as happy a progeny: the earth and all its fruit were theirs, except only one tree: which light injunction, was all that was required of them as an inſtance of their obedience and gratitude to his bounty, who had given them every thing elſe. But ſuch was their vanity and ingratitude, that they ſoon forgot the dependence ſuitable to a borrowed being, and were deluded into an empty hope of becoming by their tranſgreſſion like their Creator, and (though juſt born of the duſt) proud enough from that no-exiſtence, to diſdain one that was precarious: they did therefore eat, and were undone; they offended God, and like all their ſucceeding criminals againſt him, were conſcious that they did ſo. Innocence

ence and ſimplicity were baniſhed their boſoms, to give way to remorſe and conviction. Guilt and ſhame are the new ideas they have plucked from the tree of knowledge: their affronted Creator pronounces upon them a ſentence which they now think more ſupportable than the pain of his offended preſence, which he withdrew; and commanded nature to give them no further voluntary obedience; ſo that he was now to extort from her the continuance of their wretched condition by toil and labour, and ſhe to bring forth heirs to it with pangs and torture.

This is the account we have from a certain neglected book which is called, and for its genuine excellence above all other books, deſervedly called THE SCRIPTURE: and methinks we may be convinced of the truth of this hiſtory of our parents, by the infallible ſpots and ſymptoms of their hereditary diſeaſe in our tempers, pride and ingratitude: for what is more natural to us, than by an unreaſonable ſelf-opinion, (though we cannot but feel that we are but mere creatures, and not of ourſelves) to aſſume to ourſelves the praiſe and glory of our capacities and endowments: and how lazy, how unwilling are we to eradicate the deep and inward ſatisfaction of ſelf-admiration? however, it muſt be confeſſed, that it is the moſt ſenſeleſs and ſtupid of all our infirmities, for till you can remember and recount to us, when that thinking, throbbing particle within, firſt reſolved to wear a body, when it ſpun out its arteries, fibres and veins, contrived the warm circulating ſtream that runs through them, when you firſt ventured to let the heart pant, the lungs ſuck air, and at laſt to launch the whole tender machine into the hazard of motion; till, I ſay, you can acquaint us with all this,

you

you muſt kneel and fall down before him, by whom you were thus fearfully and wonderfully made.

But the firſt pair, now ſuſpicious of each other, baniſhed the more immediate influence and preſence of their Almighty Protector, were liable (naked and diſtreſſed as they were) to be entangled by the thorn and the brier, and torn by the lion and wolf, who have ever ſince been prompted to fly in the faces of the deteſted ingrates: therefore the encreaſing world, for their defence againſt themſelves and other animals, were obliged to go into contracts and policies, ſo that human life (by long gradation) aſcended into an art: the tongue was now to utter one thing, and the boſom to conceal another; and from a deſire of ſuperiority in our depraved natures, was bred that unſatisfied hunger, ambition; a monſtrous excreſcence of the mind, which makes ſuperfluity, riches honour, and diſtinction, but mere neceſſities of life, as if it were our fate in our fallen condition, (leſt a ſupply of what frugal nature deſires ſhould be obtained) to find out an indigence foreign to us, which is incapable of being relieved, and (which to confirm our want and miſery) increaſes with its acquiſitions: under this leading crime, are envy, hatred, cruelty, cunning, craft, and debate, muſtered and armed; and a battalion of diſeaſes, torments, and cares, the natural effects of thoſe evils, become our boſom companions; from which no arms can reſcue, no flight ſecure us but a return to that God, in whoſe protection only is our native loſt ſeat of reſt and tranquility. To which abode, ſince our expulſion, we cannot dare to approach, but guilt which runs even to ſuccours it knows vain, makes us, with our firſt parents in the ſame circumſtances, hide from omni-

omnipotence: I ſaid in the ſame circumſtances, for we have not only implicitly committed their crime, as we were in them, but do alſo actually repeat it in our own perſons: for when a created being relinquiſhes the power of its creator, and inſtead of relying on his conduct and government, draws to itſelf an independent model of life, what does it but pluck from the tree of knowledge, and attempt a theft of underſtanding, from him who is wiſdom itſelf? This is a tremendous conſideration, yet is there not that man breathing, who has any where placed his confidence but in God, and conſiders ſeriouſly his own heart, but feels its weight, nor can the boſom under it receive any impreſſion, but that of endleſs deſpair.

But behold the darkneſs diſperſes, and there is ſtill hope breaking in upon our ſorrow, by the light of which we may again lift up our eyes and ſee our Maker: for in the midſt of our deſerved miſery, our reconciliation in coming on through a mediator, who is perfectly unconcerned in our crime: but though innocent of our tranſgreſſion, aſſumes that and our nature, and, as an atonement for us, offers his life a ranſom, with this regard on our part, that as it is an expiation, it is alſo an example: an example to inſtruct us, that not only the firſt command laid upon us was a reaſonable one, but alſo the preſent life eaſy and ſupportable, for he himſelf voluntarily undergoes it in its greateſt calamities: he who had all things in his power, and wanted all things, by enforcing an obſtinent uſe of wealth, and patient enduring of poverty, reſtores us not only to the bliſs of leading this life with ſatisfaction and reſignation to the divine will, (which only is our true life) but by a ſhort paſſage through a momentary death, tranſlates us to an happy

py everlasting existence, incapable of sorrow. Weariness or change: to accomplish which great revolution, our glorious deliverer from ourselves designed to establish his empire, not by conquest, but a right much more lasting, arduous and indisputable conviction; for our slavery being intellectual and in our own bosoms, the redemption must be there also; yet the world, inchanted with its own imaginary notions of freedom, knew not how to receive so abstracted a manumission, but contemned the promise of restoration to life and liberty, from a poor man who himself enjoyed none of the advantages which arise from those dear (but misunderstood) appellations.

May we then without blame approach and behold this sacred and miraculous life? How, alas! shall we trace the mysterious steps of God and man? How consider him at once in subjection to, and dominion over nature?

The more opposite, (though most slow) method of reducing the world to its obedience, was that our blessed Saviour should appear in the despicable attire which he did, without any of those attendant accidents which attract the eye, and charm the imagination: for the knowledge which he was to introduce, being an eternal truth; the proper mansion for it was in the reason and judgment, into which when it had once entered, it was not to be removed by any impressions upon the lower faculties, to which it was not to be beholden for a reception. There is not therefore one instance in the new testament of power exerted to the destruction, though so many to the preservation of mankind: but to a degenerate race, he that heals, is less valued than he that kills: confusion, terror, noise, and amazement, are what only

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ſtrike, ſervile minds; but order ſymmetry, ſilent awe, bleſſings and peace are allurements to the open, ſimple, innocent and truly knowing; yet the very nation among whom the holy Jeſus deſcended to converſe, had (if we may ſo ſpeak) in a manner tired heaven with appearing in the more pompous demonſtrations of its power: they paſſed through waves divided, and erect for their march, they were ſuperlatively fed in a wilderneſs, a mountain ſhook, and thunder uttered their law; nations were deſtroyed to gain them inheritance! But they ſoon forgot theſe benefits, and upon the leaſt ceſſation of fear and miracle, they deſerted their Creator, and returned to their own handywork deities, who were as ſenſeleſs of their makers, as themſelves were of theirs.

Thus ſhort-lived is wonder, and thus impotent to fix (what we have ſaid our Law-giver deſigned) conviction. For which reaſon our aſtoiſhment in the new teſtament is more ſparingly raiſed, and that only to awaken our attention to plain, eaſy, and obvious truths (which ſupport themſelves when received) by the authority of miracle.

We read that he was led into wilderneſs, where he wonderfully bore hunger and thirſt for forty days; in the height of which exigence and neceſſity, the tempter came to him and urged him, if he were the Son of God, to relieve his preſent miſery, by turning the ſtones into bread; which attempt when he found fruitleſs, and obſerved that he would uſe no ſupernatural relief, but bear human nature and its infirmities, he attacks him the moſt acceptable way to our weakneſs in the ſupplies of pride and vanity: he ſhewed him the kingdoms and glory of the world, Matth. iv.

(which he had purchaſed from man by his defection from God) and offered him the dominion of them if he would worſhip him; but our Lord contemned this alſo, and in his want and poverty retired into a private village; where and in the adjacent parts if the neceſſitous man lay in obſcurity, the merciful God did not, for he never diſcontinued his viſible benign aſſiſtance, to the relief of the diſeaſed, the poſſeſſed and the tormented.

In his admirable ſermon upon the mount, he gives his divine precepts in ſo eaſy and familiar a manner, and which are ſo well adapted to all the rules of life and right reaſon, that they muſt needs carry throughout a ſelf-evident authority to all that read them; to thoſe that obey them, from the firm ſatisfaction which they inſpire; to thoſe that, neglect them, from the anxiety that naturally attends a contrary practice: there is the whole heart of man diſcovered by him that made it, and all our ſecret impulſes to ill, and falſe appearances of good, expoſed and detected: among other excellent doctrines, one which methinks muſt be, to thoſe who are ſo hardened as to read the divine oracles with unbelief, an irrefragable argument of his divinity: "But when thou prayeſt, enter into thy cloſet, and when thou haſt ſhut the door, pray to thy Father which is in ſecret, and thy Father which ſeeth in ſecret ſhall reward thee openly." Now it cannot enter into the heart of man, that any but God could be the author of a command ſo abſtracted from all worldly intereſts; for how abſurd were it in a being, that had not an intercourſe with our ſouls, or knew not their moſt ſecret motions, to direct

Matth. v.

Matth. vi. 6.

rect our application to itſelf, ſo ſtrictly apart, and out of the obſervation of any power leſs than ubiquitary?

There came to him a captain, in the behalf of his ſervant, grievouſly tormented with a palſy: our Lord promiſed him to come and heal him, but the ſoldier (with an openneſs and ſincerity of mind peculiar to his profeſſion) who could not believe in, or ſerve him, but with his whole heart, told him, he knew nature was in his power with as deſpotic a ſubjection as his men were under his, begged him only to ſpeak him whole, and he knew he would be ſo: our Saviour extolled his honeſt, frank and unreſerved confidence, gave him a ſuitable ſucceſs, ſending him away with this glorious elogium, that he had not found ſuch faith, no not in Iſrael! Matth. viii.

Thus did he beſtow mercy and ſalvation upon the eaſy and common terms of ordinary friendſhip, as if there needed nothing to make him, but believing he would be their benefactor. And, who in the leaſt affairs, as a friend to him that diſtruſts him?

In plain and apt parable, ſimilitude, and allegory, he proceeded daily to inſpire and inforce the doctrine of our ſalvation; but they of his acquaintance, inſtead of receiving what they could not oppoſe, were offended at the preſumption of being wiſer than they: is not this the carpenter's ſon, is not his mother called Mary, his brethren, James, Joſeph, Simon, and Judas? They could not raiſe their little ideas above the conſideration of him, in thoſe circumſtances familiar to them, or conceive that he who appeared not more terrible or pompous, ſhould have any thing more exalted than themſelves; he in that Matth. xiii. 55.

place therefore would not longer ineffectually exert a power which was incapable of conquering the prepoſſeſſion of their narrow and mean conceptions.

Multitudes followed him and brought him the dumb, the blind, the ſick and maimed; whom when their Creator had touched with a ſecond life, they ſaw, ſpoke, leaped, and ran; in affection to him, and admiration of his actions, the crowd could not leave him, but waited near him three days, till they were almoſt as faint and helpleſs as others they brought for ſuccour: he had compaſſion on them, commanded them to be ſeated, and with ſeven loaves, and a few little fiſhes, fed four thouſand men, beſide women and children: Oh the extatic entertainment, when they could behold their food immediately encreaſe to the diſtributer's hand, and ſee their God in perſon, feeding and refreſhing his creatures: Oh envied happineſs! But why do I ſay envied, as if our good God did not ſtill preſide over our temperate meals, chearful hours and innocent converſations. Matth. xv.

But though the ſacred ſtory is every where full of miracles, not inferior to this, and though in the midſt of thoſe acts of divinity, he never gave the leaſt hint of a deſign to become a ſecular prince, or in a forcible, or miraculous manner to caſt off the Roman yoke they were under, and reſtore again thoſe diſgraced favourites of heaven, to its former indulgence, yet had not hitherto the apoſtles themſelves (ſo deep ſet is our natural pride) any other than hopes of worldly power, preferment, riches, and pomp: for Peter, who it ſeems ever ſince he left his net and ſkiff, dreamt of nothing but being a great man, was utterly undone to hear our Saviour explain to them,

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upon an accident of ambition among them, that his kingdom was not of this world; and was ſo ſcandalized, that he, whom he had ſo long followed, ſhould ſuffer the ignominy, ſhame, and death which he foretold, that he took him aſide and ſaid,

"Be it far from thee, Lord, this ſhall not be unto thee;" for which he ſuffered a ſevere reprehenſion from his maſter, having in his view the glory of man, rather than that of God. Mat. xiv. 22.

The great change of thngis began to draw near, when the Lord of nature thought fit as a Savioor and deliverer to make his public entry into Jeruſalem, with more than the power and joy, but none of the oſtentation and pomp of a triumph: he came hnmble, meek and lowly; with an unfelt new extacy, multitudes ſtrawed his way with garments and olive-branches, crying with loud gladneſs and acclamation, "Hoſannah to the Son of David, bleſſed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!" At this great King's acceſſion to his throne, men were not enobled but ſaved; crimes were not remitted, but ſins forgiven; he did not beſtow medals, honours, favours, but health, joy, ſight, ſpeech! The firſt object the blind ever ſaw, was the Author of ſight, while the lame ran before, and the dumb repeated the Hoſannah! Thus attended, he entered into his own houſe, the ſacred temple, and by his divine authority, expelled traders and worldlings that profaned it; and thus did he, for a time, uſe a great and deſpotic power, to let unbelievers underſtand, that it was not want of, but ſuperiority to all worldly dominion, that made him not exert it: but is this then the Saviour, is this Matth. xxi.

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the deliverer? ſhall the obſcure Nazarene command Iſrael, and ſit in the throne of David? Such were the unpleaſant forms that ran in the thoughts of the then powerful in Jeruſalem, upon the moſt truly glorious entry that ever prince made; for there was no one that followed him, who was not in his intereſt their proud and diſdainful hearts, which were putrified with the love and pride of this world, were impregnable to the reception of ſo mean a benefactor and were now enough exaſperated with benefits to conſpire his death: our Lord was ſenſible of their deſign, and prepared his diſciples for it, by recounting to them now more diſtinctly what ſhould befall him; but Peter, with an ungrounded reſolution, and in a

Mat. xxvi. 33.

fluſh of temper, made a ſanguine proteſtation; that though all men were offended in him, yet will not he be offended. It was a great article of our Saviour's buſineſs in the world, to bring us to a ſenſe of our inability, without God's aſſiſtance, to do any thing great or good; he therefore told Peter, who thought ſo well of his courage and fidelity, that they would both fail him, and even he ſhould deny him thrice that very night.

But what heart can conceive? what tongue utter the ſequal? who is that yonder buffeted, mocked and ſpurned? whom do they drag like a felon? whither do they carry my Lord, my King, my Saviour and my God? and will he die to expiate thoſe very injuries? See where they have nailed the Lord and giver of life! How his wounds blacken! his body writhes, and heart heaves with pity and with agony. Oh Almighty ſufferer, look down, look down from thy triumphant infamy; lo he inclines his head to h

his ſacred boſom, ! Hark he groans, ſee he expires ! he earth trembles, the temple rends, the rocks burſt, he dead ariſe; which are the quick? which are the dead? Sure nature, all nature is, departed with her Creator.

CHAP. III.

THERE was nothing in our Saviours own deportment, or in the principles he introduced for our conduct, but what was ſo far from oppoſing, that they might naturally fall in with the ſtatutes or forms of civil government whatever, and regarded them no otherwiſe than to make us more obedient to them: yet the profeſſors of this doctrine were told they were to meet but very little quarter, for the acceptable ſervice they were to do them, but muſt lay down their very lives to bring us to a contempt of their grandeur in compariſon of greater and higher purſuits: in order to this great end, their deſpicable artillery were poverty and meekneſs; the conſideration therefore of thoſe arms is no digreſſion from our purpoſe: it is in every body's obſervation with what diſadvantage a poor man enters upon the moſt ordinary affairs, much more diſputing with the whole world, and in contradiction of the rich, that is, the wiſe; For as certainly as wealth gives acceptance and grace to all that its poſſeſſor ſays or does, ſo poverty creates diſeſteem, ſcorn and prejudice to all the undertakings of the indigent: the neceſſitous man has neither hands, lips, or underſtanding, for his own or friend's uſe, but is in the ſame condition with the ſick, with this difference only, that his is an infection no man will relieve or aſſiſt, or if he does, it is ſeldom with will

ſo much pity, as contempt, and rather for the oſtentation of the phyſician, than compaſſion on the patient: it is a circumſtance, wherein a man finds all the good he deſerves inacceſſible, all the ill unavoidable; and the poor hero is as certainly ragged, as the poor villian hanged: under theſe preſſures the poor man ſpeaks with heſitation, undertakes with irreſolution, and acts with diſſappointment: he is ſlighted in mens converſations, overlooked in their aſſemblies, and beaten at their doors: but from whence alas has he this treatment? from a creature that has only the ſupply of, but not an exemption from the wants, for which he deſpiſes him: for ſuch is the unaccountable inſolence of man, that he will not ſee that he who is ſupported, is in the ſame claſs of natural neceſſity with him that wants a ſupport; and to be helped, implies to be indigent. In a word, after all you can ſay of a man, conclude that he is rich, and you have made him friends; nor have you utterly overthrown a man in the world's opinion, till you have ſaid he is poor: this is the emphatical expreſſion of praiſe and blame, for men ſo ſtupidly forget their natural impotence and want, that riches and poverty have taken, in our imagination the place of innocence and guilt; he therefore that has ſuffered the contumelies, diſappointments, and miſeries which attend the poor man's condition, and without running into baſe, indecent, or ſervile arts for his redreſs, hath returned upon an inſolent world its ſcorn. He, I ſay, has fought a nobler fight, conquered greater difficulties, and deſerves a brighter diadem, than ever fortune beſtowed on the moſt fonded and moſt gaudy of her favourites; but to capacitate ones ſelf for this hard work, how neceſſary

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that ſublime and heroic virtue, meekneſs, a virtue which ſeems the very characteriſtic of a chriſtian, and riſes from a great, not a groveling idea of things: or as certainly as pride proceeds from a mean and narrow view of the little advantages about a man's ſelf, ſo meekneſs is founded on the extended contemplation, of the place we bear in the univerſe, and juſt obſervation how little, how empty, how wavering are our deepeſt reſolves and councils: and as to a well taught mind) when you have ſaid an haughty and proud man, you have ſpoke a narrow conception, little ſpirit, and deſpicable carriage; ſo when you have ſaid a man's meek and humble, you have acquainted us, that ſuch a perſon has arrrived at the hardeſt taſk in the world in an univerſal obſervation found him, to be quick to ſee his own faults and other mens virtues, and at the height of pardoning every man ſooner than himſelf; you have alſo given us to underſtand, that to treat him kindly, ſincerely and reſpectfully, is but a mere juſtice to him that is ready to do us the ſame offices: this temper of ſoul keeps us always awake to a juſt ſenſe of things, teaches us that we are as well akin to worms as to angels, and as nothing is above theſe, ſo is nothing below thoſe: it keeps our underſtanding tight about us, ſo that all things appear to us great or little as they are in nature, not as they are gilded or ſullied by accident and fortune.

Meekneſs is to the mind, what a good mein, is to the body, without which, the beſt limbed and fineſt complexioned perſon may be very diſagreeable; and with it, a very homely and plain one cannot be ſo; for a good air ſupplies the imperfection of feature and ſhape, by throwing a certain beauty on the whole,

which covers the diſagreeableneſs of the parts; it has a ſtate and humility peculiar to itſelf above all virtues, like the holy ſcripture, its ſacred record, where the higheſt things are expreſſed in the moſt eaſy terms, and which carries throughout a condeſcending explanation, and a certain meekneſs of ſtile.

With this circumſtance, and this ready virtue, the faithful followers of a crucified maſter were to ſhape their courſe to an eternal kingdom, and with that in proſpect to contemn the hazards and diſaſters of a cruel and impenitent generation. Great were the actions and ſufferings of all our bleſſed Saviour's apoſtles, but St Paul being peculiarly ſent to us who were or are Gentiles, he, methinks, more particularly challenges our regard: God who beſtowed upon others ſupernaturally the gift of tongues, but not of arts, thought therefore fit to make uſe of him already maſter in ſome meaſure of both, and qualified to converſe with the politer world by his acquaintance with ther ſtudies, laws and cuſtoms: but tho' he ſhews himſelf by frequent brisk ſallies, and quick interrogatories, ſkilful in approaching the paſſions by rhetoric, yet he is very modeſt in any of thoſe ornaments, and ſtrikes all along at the reaſon, where he never fails to convince the attentive and unprejudiced; and though his perſon was very deſpicable (which to a ſtranger is almoſt an inſuperable inconvenience) yet ſuch was the power of the commanding truth which he uttered, and his ſkill how and when to utter it, that there every where appears in his character, either the man of buſineſs, the gentleman, the hero, the apoſtle, or the martyr; which eminence above the other apoſtles might well be expected from his ſanguine and undertaking complexion,

tempered

tempered by education, and quickened by grace: it is true indeed, he had oppoſed in the moſt outragious and violent manner this new faith, and was acceſſary to the murder of the glorious leader of the army of martyrs, St Stephen; but that fierce diſpoſition fell off with the ſcales from his eyes, and God, who ever regards the intention, changed his miſtaken method of ſerving him, and he is now ready to promote the ſame religion by his ſufferings, which before he would have extirpated by his perſecutions. He and his companion had made very great progreſs in the converſion both of Jews and Gentiles, but certain unbelievers prompted the multitude to a reſolution at a general aſſembly to aſ- Acts xiv. ſaſſine them, but they advertiſed of it fled unto Lycaonia, where their actions and eloquence were very ſucceſsful; but at Lyſtra, a certain poor cripple (from his mother's womb) heard him with very particular attention and devotion, whom the apoſtle (obſerving in his very countenance his warm contrition, and preparation of ſoul to receive the benefit) commanded to ſtand up, upon which he immediately jumped upon his legs, and walked: this miracle alarmed the whole city, who believed their gods had deſcended in human ſhapes: Barnabas was immediately Jove, and Paul his Mercury: the prieſt of Jupiter now is coming to ſacrifice to them with oxen and garlands; but they Ver. 15. ran into the multitude; we are men like you, are ſubject to the ſame weakneſs, infirmities, and paſſions with yourſelves: we, alas! are impotent of the great things ourſelves have done; your and our Creator will no longer let you wander in the maze and error of your vanities and falſe notions of

his Deity, but has ſent us with inſtances of his omnipotence to awake you to a worſhip worthy him, and worthy you. Oh graceful paſſage to ſee the great apoſtle oppoſe his own ſucceſs! Now only his vehemence, his power and his eloquence are too feeble when they are urgent againſt themſelves; for with prayers and entreaties the crowd could hardly be prevailed upon, to forbear their adoration. But this applauſe, like all other, was but a mere guſt, for the malice of certain Jews followed them from Iconium, and quickly inſinuated into the giddy multitude, as much rancour as they had before devotion; who in a tumultuary manner ſtoned St Paul, and draged him as dead, out of the gates of the city; but he bore their affronts with much leſs indignation then their worſhip: here was in a trice the higheſt and loweſt condition, the moſt reſpectful and moſt inſolent treatment that man could receive; but chriſtianity, which kept his eye upon the cauſe not effect of his actions, (and always gives us a tranſient regard to tranſitory things,) depreſſed him when adored, exalted him when affronted.

But theſe two excellent men, though they had the endearments of fellow ſuffering, and their friendſhip heightened by the yet faſter tie of religion, could not longer accompany each other, but upon a diſpute about taking Mark with them, who it ſeems had before deſerted them, their diſſention grew to the higheſt, a reſentment between generous friends ever can, even to part and eſtrange them: but they did it without rancour, malice, or perhaps diſ-eſteem of each other; for God has made us, whether we obſerve it at the inſtant of being ſo or not, ſo much inſtruments of his

Acts xv. 39.

his great and ſecret purpoſes, that he has given every individual man, I know not what peculiarly his own. which ſo much diſtinguiſhes him from all other perſons, that it is impoſſible, ſometimes, for two of the ſame generous reſolution, honeſty and integrity, to do well together; whether it be that providence has ſo ordered it to diſtribute virtue the more, or whatever it is, ſuch is the frequent effect. For theſe noble perſonages were forced to take different ways, and in thoſe were eminently uſeful in the ſame cauſe; as you may have ſeen two cymical waters, aſunder, ſhiningly tranſparent, thrown together, muddy and offenſive.

The apoſtle was warned in a viſion to go into Macedonia, whither he and his now companion Silas accordingly went: at Philippi he commanded an evil ſpirit to depart out of a young woman; but her maſter (to whom her diſtraction was a revenue, which ceaſed by her future inability to anſwer the demands uſually made to her,) with the ordinary method of hiding private malice in public zeal, raiſed the multitude upon them, as diſturbers of the public peace, and innovators upon their laws and liberties: the multitude hurried them to the magiſtrates, who happening to be as wiſe as themſelves, commanded them to be ſtripped, whipped, and claped in goal: the keeper receiving very ſtrict orders for their ſafe cuſtody, put them in irons in the dungeon; the abuſed innocents had now no way left for their redreſs, but applying to their God, who, when all human arts and forces fail, is ready for our relief, nor did St Paul on leſs occaſions implore præternatural aſſiſtance; Acts xvi.

* *Nec*

* *Nec Deus interſit niſi dignus vindice Nodus Inciderit*——

Let not God approach the ſcene,
In caſes for a God too mean.

We muſt, to men of wit and gallantry, quote out of their own ſcriptures. Their generous way of devotion, and begging aſſiſtance, was giving thanks for their preſent extremities: in the midſt of their ſores and chains, they ſang hymns and praiſes to their Creator: immediately the bolts flew, the manacles fell off, the doors were opened, and the earth ſhook: the goaler awakes in terror, and believing all under his cuſtody eſcaped, went to diſpatch himſelf; but St Paul calls to him, he comes and beholds his priſoners detained by nothing but their amazing liberty; the horror, ſorrow, torture, and deſpair of a dungeon, turned into the joy, the rapture, the hallelujah, the extacy of an heaven; he fell trembling at the apoſtles feet, reſigned himſelf to his captives, and felt in himſelf the happy exchange of his liberty, for that yoke in which alone is perfect freedom. Early the next morning, upon this ſtupendious occaſion, the magiſtrates ſent orders thoſe men might be releaſed: but St Paul, who knew he had law on his ſide, and that his being a priſoner made him not the leſs a gentleman and a Roman, ſcorned their pretended favour, nor would regard their meſſage, till they had themſelves in as public a manner acknowledged their offence,

* Horace's general Epiſtle to Piſo's, verſe 105.

fence, as they had commited it, which they did by attending them in the goal, and desiring in a ceremonious manner they would leave the citly; upon which the apostle accepted his inlargement, and when he had settled what business he had in that town, left it and its rulers to to forget that painful truth, which they had neither power to gainsay, nor ingenuity to acknowledge. Acts xvi.

His taking leave of the chief of the Ephesian churches, is hardly to be read without tears, where when he had reminded them of his whole blameless, disinterested, humble, and laborious carriage, he acquaints them with his resolution of going to Jerusalem, and never to return thither; he knew not, he said, what would particularly befal him there, but that in general, afflictions, distresses, and indignities were the portion of his life, which he was ready to hazard or lay down in a cause which has a certain sweetness in it, that can make a man embrace his chains, and enjoy his miseries; what could be answered to his gallant declaration and behaviour but what they did who "All wept sore, and fell on St Paul's neck, and kissed him: sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more." Certain Jews of Asia were glad to see him again at Jerusalem, and enflamed the city with their personal knowledge of his carriage, to the disparagement of the temple, and the rites of their nation: upon which he had been torn to pieces, had he not been rescued by the commanding military officer there; of whom (going with him as a prisoner into the castle) he obtained the liberty of speaking to the people: Acts xx. 38.

people: they heard him with great attention, till he contradicted their monopoly of God; at which they loſt all order and patience. But oppoſition was ſo far from diſpiriting, that it did but quicken his reſolution; for his great heart, inſtead of fainting and ſubſiding, roſe and biggened in proportion to any growing danger, that threatened him; however he is carried to his impriſonment, but not even there to be without debate, for he is, by the commander's order, to be ſcourged, to which he does not paſſively, or baſely ſubmit, but aſſerts his Roman privilege, and exemption from ſuch indignities.

Acts, cap. xxiii. He was thereupon next morning brought down to a trial by a council of his own nation, where upon his very opening his mouth, the chief prieſt commanded him to be ſtruck, for which he calls him hypocrite and falſe pretender to juſtice, who could uſe a man, he was to ſit as judge of, ſo inhumanly; but his good breeding being founded upon no leſs a ſanction than the command of God, he immediately recollects himſelf, and acknowledges his error and diſreſpect to the dignity of his office: yet obſerving (by this treatment from the preſident of the council) the uſage he was to expect, by a very ſkilful turn he makes friends in an aſſembly unanimous in his ruin, but in that only unanimous; for Phariſees, in which ſect he was bred, compoſing part of the court, he cloſes with their belief of a reſurrection, and there grounded the cruelty he had met with among the Jews: this put them into ſo great a flame, that to ſave him he was forcibly taken away into the place from whence he came: his enemies, galled to the quick, at his eſcape, conſpired to kill him, when (upon

(upon the high prieſt's requeſt) he ſhould be remanded to a trial: a nephew of the apoſtle's acquainted him with this; he was neither afraid or amazed at the intelligence, but like a man of buſineſs and the world, diſcreetly and calmly ordered the youth to be introduced to the captain, whom he knew anſwerable for the ſafety of his priſoner: the officer in the night ſent him with a ſtrong party to Felix the governor of the province, and directed his accuſers to follow him thither: before Felix, one Tertullus, a mercenary orator, bauled an impertinent harangue, introduced with falſe praiſe of the judge, and cloſed with falſe accuſation of the priſoner, who with cogent plain truths, and matter of fact, baffled his barbarous eloquence, and obtained ſo good a ſenſe of himſel and his innocence with the viceroy, that he gave him a private audience on the ſubject of his faith; but inſtead of then making his court to him, he fell upon his excellency's own darling vices, talked of righteouſneſs, temperance, and judgment, with its terrors for neglect of ſuch duties. In thoſe heathen times, it ſeems it was uſual to have exceſs, wantonneſs, and gluttony, to be the practice of courts, and the apoſtle ſo nearly touched his lordſhip, that he fell into a ſudden diſorder before his inferior, and diſmiſſed him till another ſeaſon; he afterwards frequently was entertained by him, not without hopes of a bribe, which was alſo, in very old times, the way to the favours of the great.

But Felix now leaving his lieutenancy to Feſtus, this friendleſs good man was a proper perſon for a tool to his vanity, by doing an obliging thing to the Jews, in leaving him ſtill in cuſtody at his departure, and no leſs uſeful to his new excellency to be ſacri-

ficed to them upon his entry: for at their requeſt to have him brought to Jeruſalen, (deſigning to diſpatch him by the way) though he at firſt denied it, he afterwards propoſed it to the apoſtle himſelf, to have the iſſue of his trial there: but he handſomely evaded his baſe condeſcenſion, and their as baſe malice, by appealing as a Roman to Cæſar himſelf, before whoſe authority he alſo then ſtood: but he is ſtill kept in goal in the ſame ſtate, to gratify the Jews, till Agrippa the Tetrarch of Gallilee came to wait on Feſtus, who (after he had been there ſome days) entertained him with the caſe of St Paul, and acquainted him that he was at a loſs what to do with him: he was ſo odious to the Jews, that he cared not to enlarge him, and ſo innocent in himſelf, that he knew not what account to ſend with him to Rome: this moved Agrippa's curioſity to hear him himſelf; in very great pomp, he, his ſiſter, and whole retinue came to his trial: the apoſtle made ſo excellent a defence, that mean, wronged, poor, and unfriended as he was, he was neither ridiculous or contemptible to that courtly audience, but prevailed ſo far upon the greateſt and wiſeſt man there, that he forced him to declare. "Thou haſt almoſt perſuaded me to be a chriſtian;" it would, methinks, be a ſin not to repeat his very handſome anſwer.

"I would to God, that not only
Acts xxvi. 29. thou, but alſo all that hear me this day, were not only almoſt, but altogether ſuch as I am, except theſe bonds."

His appeal made it neceſſary in courſe
Acts xxvii. of law, that he ſhould go to Rome; in his paſſage thither, and in the tempeſt, hunger and ſhipwreck, his conſtancy was not a ſupport

purt to him only, but alſo to the whole company; and being thrown upon a barbarous iſland, he did and received mutual offices among the poor ſavages, not yet cultivated into ingratitude. At Rome, the other priſoners were carried into ſafe cuſtody, but he was permitted, with a ſoldier only for his ward, to live in his own hired houſe, teaching the things which concern the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, no man forbidding him; for it was only in Nero's reign, nor had Rome yet arrived at the exquiſite and refined tyranny of an inquiſition. Thus we have been diſtinct in running through the more illuſtrious paſſages of this conſumate life and character, as they are placed in holy writ, and may preſume, after all the injuries we have done him, that there is not any portraiture in the moſt excellent writers of morality, than can come up to its native beauty; yet was not he contented to ſerve his God only by example, but has as eminently done it by precept; where he purſues vice, and urges virtue with all the reaſon, energy, and force that either good ſenſe or piety can inſpire: and not upon the airy and fleeting foundation of the inſenſibility noble minds bear to the aſſaults of fortune; which has been the impertinence of heathen moraliſts, and among them Seneca.

" * A good man is not only the friend of God, " but the very image, the diſciple, the imitator of " him, and the true child of his heavenly Father: he " is true to himſelf, and acts with conſtancy and reſo- " lution. Scipio, by a croſs wind being forced into

* L'Strange's 3d p. of Seneca's morals, epiſt. 26.

" the power of his enemies, caſt himſelf upon the " point of his ſword; and as the people were en- " quiring what was become of the general, the gene- " ral, ſays Scipio, is very well, and ſo he expired. " A gallant man, is fortune's match: his courage " provokes and deſpiſes thoſe terrible appearances, " that would enſlave us; a wiſe man is out of the " reach of fortune, but not free from the malice of " it; and all attempts upon him are no more than " Xerxes's arrows; they may darken the day, but " they cannot ſtrike the ſun."

This is Seneca's very ſpirit, opinion and genius; but alas, what abſurdity is here! after the panegyric of a brave or honeſt man, as the diſciple or imitator of God, this is inſtanced in the baſeſt action a man can be guilty of; a general's diſpatching himſelf in an extreme difficulty, and deſerting his men and his honour; and what is this but doing a mean action with a great countenance? What could this imitator of God, out of the power of fortune, do more in obedience to what they call ſo, than ſacrificing his life to it: but this is bombaſt got into the very ſoul, fuſtian in thinking!

Quanto Rectius hic qui nil molitur inepte.

How much better he?

" Be ye ſteadfaſt, unmoveable,
1 Cor. xv. 58. always abounding in the works of
of the Lord, foraſmuch as you
know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

Here is ſupporting ourſelves under misfortunes, propoſed upon the reaſonable terms of reward and puniſhment;

punishment; and all other is fantastic, arrogant, and ungrounded.

The first epistle to Corinth is most exquisitely adapted to the present temper of England, nor did ever that city (though proverbial of it) pretend to be more refinedly pleased than at present London; but St Paul more emphatically dissuades from those embasing satisfaction of sense.

"Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats; but God shall destroy both it and them." 1 Cor. vi. 13.

He, methinks, throws blush and confusion in the face of his readers, when he argues on these subjects; for who can conceive his body, the mansion of an immortal spirit, capable to receive the aspiration and grace of an eternal God, and at the same time, by gluttony and drunkenness, entertain in that place fuel to enflame themselves into adultry, rage and revenge? as if our misery were our study, and chastity, innocence and temperance, (those easy and agreeable companions) were not preferable to the convulsions of wrath, and tortures of lust.

"Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ, shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot." 1 Cor. vi. 15.

How ugly has he made Corinna at one sentence? Shall I, who am conscious that he who laid down an immaculate body, to cleanse me from the filth and stain of a polluted one, and know that the holy Jesus has promised to be present to all the conflicts of my soul, banish him thence, and be guilty of so unnatural a coition, as to throw that temple into the embraces of a mercenary strumpet?

But

But muſt we then deſert love and the fair.

The cordial drop heav'n in our cup has thrown,
To make the nauſeous draught of life go down.

No, God forbid! the apoſtle allows us a virtuous enjoyment of our paſſions; but indeed extirpates all our falſe ideas of pleaſure and happineſs in them; he takes love out of its diſguiſe, and puts it on its own gay and becoming dreſs of innocence; and indeed it is, among other reaſons, from want of wit and invention in our modern gallants, that the beautiful ſex is abſurdly and viciouſly entertained by them: for there is in their tender frame, native ſimplicity, groundleſs fear, and little unaccountable contradictions, upon which there might be built expoſtulations to divert a good and intelligent young woman, as well as the fulſome raptures, guilty impreſſions, ſenſeleſs deifications, and pretended deaths that are every day offered her.

No pen certainly ever furpaſſed either the logic or rhetoric of his fifteenth chapter: how does he intermingle hope and fear, life and death? Our riſing from our graves is moſt admirably argued on the received philoſophy, that corruption precedes generation, and the eaſy inſtances of new grain, new plants, and new trees, from the minute particles of ſeed; and when he has buried us, how does he move the heart with an "Oh death where is thy ſting! Oh grave where is thy victory!" We have at once all along the quickeſt touches of diſtreſs and of triumph. It were endleſs to enumerate theſe excellencies and beauties, in his writings; but ſince they were all in his more public and miniſterial office, let us ſee him in

in his private life: There is nothing expreſſes a man's particular character more fully, than his letters to his intimate friends; we have one of that nature of this great apoſtle to Philemon, which in the modern language would perhaps run thus:

SIR,

"IT is with the deepeſt ſatisfaction that I every "day hear you commended for your generons "behaviour to all of that faith, in the articles of "which I had the honour and happineſs to initiate "you; for which though I might preſume to an au- "thority to oblige your compliance in a requeſt I "am going to make to you, yet chuſe I rather to "apply myſelf to you as a friend, than an apoſtle; for "with a man of your great temper, I know I need "not a more powerful pretence than that of my age "and impriſonment: yet is not my petition for my- "ſelf, but in behalf of the bearer, your ſervant One- "ſimus, who has robbed you, and run away from "you; what he has defrauded you of, I will be an- "ſwerable for, this ſhall be a demand upon me; not "to ſay that you owe me your very ſelf: I called "him your ſervant, but he is now alſo to be regard- "ed by you in a greater relation, even that of your "fellow chriſtian; for I eſteem him a ſon of mine "as much as yourſelf; nay, methinks it is a certain "peculiar endearment of him to me, that I had the "happineſs of gaining him in my confinement: I "beſeech you to receive him, and think it an act "of providence, that he went away from you for a "ſeaſon, to return more improved to your ſervice "for ever."

This letter is the ſincere image of a worthy, pious and

and brave man, and the ready utterance of a generous chriſtian temper; how handſomely does he aſſume, though a priſoner? How humbly condeſcend, tho' an apoſtle? Could any requeſt have been made, or any perſon obliged with a better grace? The very criminal ſervant, is no leſs with him than his ſon and his brother; for chriſtianity has that in it, which makes men pity, not ſcorn the wicked, and by a beautiful kind of ignorance of themſelves, think thoſe wretches their equals; it aggravates all the benefits and good offices of life, by making them ſeem fraternal; and the chriſtian feels the wants of the miſerable ſo much his own, that it ſweetens the pain of the obliged, when he that gives, does it with an air, that has neither oppreſſion or ſuperiority in it, but had rather have his generoſity appear an enlarged ſelf-love than diffuſive bounty, and is always a benefactor with a mein of a receiver.

Theſe are the great and beauteous parts of life and friendſhip; and what is there in all that morality can preſcribe, than can make a man do ſo much as the high ambition of pleaſing his Creator, with whom the methods of addreſs are as immutable as the favour obtained by them?

Here methinks we could begin again upon this amiable picture, or ſhall we ſearch antiquity for the period and conſummation of his illuſtrious life, to give him the crown and glory of martyrdom? That were a needleſs labour, for he that has been in a battle, has to his prince the merit of having died there; and St Paul has ſo often in our narration confronted death, that we may beſtow upon him that celeſtial title, and diſmiſs him with the juſt eulogy in his own ſpritely expreſſion that he died daily.

Now

Now the addreſs and conſtancy with which this great apoſtle has behaved himſelf in ſo many various forms of calamity, are an ample conviction, that to make our life one decent and conſiſtent action, we ſhould have one conſtant motive of living, and that motive a confidence in God: for had he breathed on any other cauſe, inſtead of application to the Almighty, he muſt (on many occaſions which we have mentioned) have ran to the dagger, or the bowl of poiſon: for the heathen virtue preſcribes death before ſtripes or impriſonment; but whatever pompous look elegant pens may have given to the illuſtrious diſtreſſed (as they would have us think the perſons are, who to evade miſeries, have profuſed their lives, and ruſhed to death for relief:) If we look to the bottom of things, we ſhall eaſily obſerve, that it is not a generous ſcorn of chains, or delicate diſtaſte of an impertinent being, (which two pretences include all the varniſh that is put upon ſelf-murder) but it ever was, and ever will be, pride or cowardiſe, that makes life inſupportable: for ſince accidents are not in our power, but will (in ſpite of all our care and vigilance) befall us; what remains, but that we accommodate ourſelves ſo far, as to bear them with the greateſt decency and handſomeſt patience we are able? And indeed reſiſtence to what we cannot avoid, is not the effect of a valiant heart, but a ſtubborn ſtomach: which contumacy, till we have quite rooted out our pride, will always make things too little, and our cowardiſe too large: for as fear gives a falſe idea of ſufferings, and attempts, as above our ſtrength, tho' they are not ſuch, ſo vanity makes things deſpicable, and beneath us, which are rather for our honour and reputation; but if men would ſincerely underſtand

that they are but creatures, all the diſtinctions of great and little, high and low, would be eaſily ſwallowed up in the contemplaation of the hopes we entertain in the place we ſhall have in his mercy who is the author of all things.

CHAP. IV.

BUT ſince we have hitherto treated this ſubject in examples only, (by a view of ſome eminent heathen, by a diſtant admiration of the life of our bleſſed Saviour, and a near examination of that of his apoſtle St Paul,) and ſince the in indulgence of mens paſſions and intereſts calls all things that contradict their practice, mere notion, and theory: we muſt from this place deſcend from the bright incentives of their actions to conſider lower life, and talk of motives which are common to all men, and which are the impulſes of the ordinary world, as well as of captains, heros, worthies lawgivers, and ſaints. Which when we have performed, if it ſhall appear, that thoſe motives are beſt uſed and improved, when joined with religion; we may reſt aſſured, that it is a ſtable, ſober, and practical, as well as generous, exalted and heroic poſition, that true greatneſs of mind is to be maintained only by chriſtian principles.

We will venture then to aſſert, that the two great ſprings of human actions are fame and conſcience; for though we uſually ſay ſuch a one does not value his reputation, and ſuch a one is a man of no conſcience, it will perhaps be very eaſy to prove, that there ſeldom lives a perſon ſo profligate and abandoned

doned, as not to prefer, either the one or the other, even to life itſelf; and by the way, methinks, the quick pleaſure men taſte in the one, and as lively ſmart in the other, are ſtrong arguments of their immortal nature: for ſuch abſtracted ſufferings and enjoyments argue our ſouls too large for their preſent manſions, and raiſe us (exen while we are in theſe bodies) to a being which does not at all affect them, but which is wholly ſpiritual and immaterial.

So ſtrong (as we were going to proceed) is the paſſion for fame, that it never ſeems utterly extinct: for not to look among the men of the ſword, (whoſe whole pay it is,) and who ſuffer infinite hazards, toils, and miſeries to enjoy it; not, I ſay, to dwell upon them, whoſe more profeſſed purſuit is glory, we ſhall find it intrudes alſo as reſtleſsly upon thoſe of the quill, nay the very authors who conceal their names, are yet vainer than they who publiſh theirs. They both indeed aim at your applauſe, but the mock diſguiſe of themſelves in the former, is but a mere ſubtle arrogance, at once to enjoy your eſteem, and the reputation of contemning it: nay not only ſuch who would recommend themſelves by great actions, and liberal arts, but even the loweſt of mankind, and they who have gone out of the road, not only of honour, but alſo common honeſty, have ſtill a remaining reliſh for praiſe and applauſe. For you may frequently obſerve malefactors at an execution, even in that weight of ſhame and terror, preſerve as it were a corner of their ſouls for the reception of pity, and die with the ſturdy ſatisfaction of not appearing to bend at the calamity, or perhaps deſert their accomplices, by the ſacrifice and betraying of

whoſe lives we frequently ſee they might have ſaved their own.

By which laſt inſtance (that the baſeſt men have ſtill ſomething punctilious to them) we may obſerve that the ſenſe of fame and conſcience is never quite killed, but that when we are come to the worſt, we have only carried them into another intereſt, and turned our gratifications that way, only to different objects; nor can it be imagined that the love-hiſtories we daily hear young fellows relate of the favours and fondneſs of debauched women to them, can be all that time deſigned for a ſelf-accuſation: no, their idle minds have only ſhifted their ſenſe of things, and though they glory in their ſhame, yet ſtill they glory.

What then muſt men do to make themſelves eaſy in this invincible paſſion, or how ſhall they poſſeſs a thing that is of ſo inconſiſtent a nature, that if they will be maſters of it, they muſt ſhun it: for if they ſpeak to their own advantage, or ſuffer another to do it to them, they are equally contemptible: thus they ſpend their lives in purſuit of an ever abſent good; and yet tho' applauſe muſt never come quite home to them, they are it ſeems miſerable, except they are conſcious that they have it.

Now if every heart lies open to it, that heart that is moſt paſſionate to it, muſt be an eternal anxiety to attain it, though that very love frequently leads to the loſs of it: for when our outmoſt bliſs is placed in this charming poſſeſſion of praiſe, and the world's opinion of our accompliſhments, a flatterer needs no more in attempts upon mens honeſty, and womens chaſtity, but their being convinced their crimes may

may be a ſecret: ſo eaſily, alas! are both ſexes led by admiration into contempt.

To rectify therefore, and adjuſt our deſires in this kind, we have the other concomitant motive of a living conſcience, or the knowledge and judgment of what we are doing, which in the voyage of life is our ballaſt, as the other is our ſail: but tho' fame and conſcience, like judge and criminal, are thus placed together in us, they will have an underſtanding, and go into each others intereſt, except there is a ſuperior court, in which both may be examined. Here was the unhappy block on which the noble heathen ſtumbled, and loſt his way; for the bare conſcience of a thing's being ill, was not of conſideration enough of itſelf to ſupport men in the anguiſh of diſgrace, poverty, and impriſonment. But ſucceſs, applauſe, renown, honour and command had attractions too forcible to mere men, to be relinquiſhed but with life itſelf; to which truth, the braver and higher part of the heathen would have died martyrs.

The different ſects and ſortings of themſelves into diſtinct claſſes of opinion, ſeem to be no other than the proſecution of this natural impulſe, to reputation which claſs was ſtoical or epicurean, or the like, according to the force and bent of their complexions, which they miſ-underſtood for their conſcience; and Saluſt begins his fine ſtory of Catiline's conſpiracy, with an acknowledgement to this purpoſe, for he takes it to be the peculiar duty and ſuperiority of the human race above other animals (which he calls prone and obedient to their bellies) Ne vitam ſilentio tranſiant, not to let life paſs away in a lazy ſilence; and further, Is mihi demum vivere & frui anima videtur qui, negotio aliquo intentus artis, bonæ famam quarit:

quarit: He only in his opinion might truly be ſaid to live, who being employed in ſome uſeful affair, obtained a reputation in an honeſt or liberal art. Thus this author of ſober and excellent ſenſe, makes it the end and happy conſummation of a well ſpent life, to arrive at a good fame; which makes our aſſertion in the beginning of this diſcourſe very natural, viz. That the heathen virtues, which were little elſe but diſguiſed or artificial paſſions, ſince their good was in fame) muſt riſe or fall with diſappointment or ſucceſs.

Now our good God, who claims not an utter extirpation, but the direction only of our paſſions, has provided alſo for this great deſire, in giving it a ſcope as boundleſs as itſelf; and ſince it is never to be ſatisfied, hath allowed it an aim which may ſupply it with eternal employment.

Mat. v. 16. "Let your light ſo ſhine before men, that they may ſee your good works, and glorify your father which is in heaven."

In this command is the whole buſineſs of reputation, (about which we are ſo miſerably anxious) wholly rectified: and fame no longer a turbulent wayward, uneaſy purſuit, but (when thus made a ſubordinate, and ſecondary cauſe of action) a calm, eaſy, indifferent and untroubled poſſeſſion.

And what more glorious ambition can the mind of man have, than to conſider itſelf actually employed in the ſervice of, and in a manner in conjunction with the mind of the univerſe, which is for ever buſy without toil, and working without wearineſs.

Thus the ſpirit of man, by new acquiſitions, will daily receive earneſts of a nobler ſtate, and by its own enlargement

enlargement better apprehend that ſpirit, after whoſe image it was made, which knows no confinement of place.

This adjuſted paſſion will make men truly agreeable, ſubſtantiouſly famous, for when the firſt intention purſues the ſervice of the Almighty, diſtinction will naturally come, the only way it ever does come, without being apparently courted; nor will men be loſt through a fondneſs of it, by affectation in the familiar life, or knavery in the buſy.

It is not a ſtoical rant, but a reaſonable confidence in a man thus armed, to be unmoved at misfortunes; let the ſea, or the people rage; let the billows beat, the world be confuſed, the earth be ſhook; it is not to him a terror, but a daily requeſt of his to haſten the very laſt day of human nature, that he may finiſh this various being, and enjoy the preſence of his Maker in an endleſs tranquility.

Thus, by taking in fame, the chriſtian religion (and no other motive) has fortified our minds on all ſides, and made them impregnable by any happineſs or miſery with which this world can attack it: And now, if it is impartially apparent to us, that the chriſtian ſcheme is not only the way to eaſe and compoſure of mind in unhappy circumſtances, but alſo the nobleſt ſpur to honeſt and great actions, what hinders but that we be baptized and reſolve all our perplexed notions of juſtice, generoſity, patience and bravery, into that one eaſy and portable virtue, piety? Which could arm our anceſtors in this faith with ſo reſtleſs and victorious a conſtancy, that by their ſufferings, their religion, from the outcaſt and ſcorn of the earth, has aſcended ſovereign thrones; and defender of the faith, and moſt chriſtian king, are appellations

of

of the greateſt monarchs of the moſt refined nations; nor can we enough thank the Almighty, who has diſpoſed us into the world, when the chriſtian name bears pomp and authority, and not in its offenſive, low and deſpiſed beginnings: but alas! its ſtate is as much militant at ever, for there are earthly and narrow ſouls, as deeply ſcandaled at the proſperity the profeſſors and teachers of this ſacred faith enjoy, and object to them the miſeries and neceſſities of the primitive believers: light and ſuperficial men! not ſeeing that riches is a much more dangerous diſpenſation than that of poverty, this we oppoſe as a foe that we run to meet as a friend, and an enemy does his work more ſucceſsfully in an embrace than a blow; but ſince the neceſſaries, conveniencies and honours of life which the clergy enjoy, are ſo great an offence to their deſpiſers, they are the more engaged to hold them dear; for they who envy a man for what he has, would certainly ſcorn him without it; when therefore they are both in good and bad fortune irreconcileable to them, may they always offend with their happineſs; for it is not to be doubted but that there are biſhops and governors in the church of England, whoſe decent hoſpitality, meekneſs and charity to their brethren, will place them in the ſame manſions with the moſt heroic poor; and convince the miſtake of their enemies, that the eternal Paſtor has given his worldly bleſſings into hands by which he approves their diſtribution; and ſtill beſtows upon us great and examplary ſpirits, that can conquer the difficulties and enchantments of wealth itſelf.

To follow ſuch excellent leaders, it will be neceſſary we now conſider alſo what may be our beſt rule in

in that ſtate we call our good fortune, and inquire whether chriſtianity can as well become its profeſſors in the enjoyments of proſperity, as we have ſeen it has in the hardſhips of adverſity; this alſo we ſhall beſt know, by contemplating our natural frame and tendency, which religion either aſſiſts or corrects in theſe circumſtances.

The eternal God, in whom we live, and move, and have our being, has impreſſed upon us all one nature, which is an emanation from him, who is univerſal life, preſſes us by natural ſociety to a cloſe union with each other; which is, methinks, a ſort of enlargement of our very ſelves when we run into the ideas, ſenſations, and concerns of our brethren: by this force of their make, men are inſenſibly hurried into each other, and by a ſecret charm we lament with the unfortunate, and rejoice with the glad; for it is not poſſible for an human heart to be averſe to any thing that is human; but by the very mein and geſture of the joyful and diſtreſſed, we riſe and fall into their condition; and ſince joy is communicative, it is reaſonable that grief ſhould be contagious, both which are ſeen and felt at a look, for one man's eyes are ſpectacles to another to read his heart: thoſe uſeful and honeſt inſtruments do not only diſcover objects to us, but make ourſelves alſo tranſparent; for they, in ſpite of diſſimulation, when the heart is full, will brighten into gladneſs, and guſh into tears: from this foundation in nature is kindled that noble ſpark of celeſtial fire we call charity or compaſſion, which opens our boſoms, and extends our arms to embrace all mankind, and by this it is that the amorous man is not more ſuddenly melted with beauty, than the compaſſionate with miſery.

Thus are we framed for mutual kindneſs, good will and ſervice, and therefore our bleſſed Saviour has been pleaſed to give us (as a reiterated abridgement of all his law) the command of loving one another; and the man that imbibes that noble principle is in no danger of inſolently tranſgreſſing againſt his fellow creatures, but will certainly uſe all the advantages which he has from nature and fortune, to the good and welfare of others, for whoſe benefit, (next to the adoration of his Maker) he knows he was created. This temper of mind, when neither polluted, or miſled, tends to this purpoſe, and the improvement of it by religion, raiſes on it an exalted ſuperſtructure, which inclines him in his words and actions, to be above the little crafts and doubles with which the world beneath him is perplexed: he is intrinſically poſſeſſed of what mere morality muſt own to be a fantaſtical chimera, the being wholly diſintereſted in the affairs of the perſon he affects or befriends; for indeed when the regard of our Maker is not our firſt impulſe and deſire, in our hopes and purpoſes, it is impoſſible but that the fondneſs of ourſelves and our own intereſt muſt recur upon us, and leaven the whole courſe of our actions: when the fountain is muddy it muſt ſtain the rivulet, and the predominant paſſion gives a tincture to all our cares and pleaſures; ſo that men ordinarily love others out of a tenderneſs to themſelves, and do good offices to receive them with increaſe and uſury: nay, if we follow the beſt friendſhip we meet with to its ſource, and allow it to be what it ſometimes really is, a paſſionate inclination to ſerve another, without hopes or viſible poſſibility of receiving a return, yet we muſt alſo allow, that there is a deep intereſt to ourſelves

ourſelves (though indeed a beautiful one) in ſatisfying that inclination; but that good intention is ſubject to be changed, and interrupted (as perhaps it was taken up) by accident, miſtake, or turn of humour; but he that loves others for the love of God, muſt be unchangeable, for the cauſe of his benevolence to us is ſo; and though indeed he is not without ſelf-regard in the hopes of receiving one day an immenſe reward of all his labour, yet ſince that is ſeparate from this world, it is to all intents of life, as far from interfering with our purpoſes, as if he had no ſuch expectation; and that very proſpect in him is not of a ſelfiſh incommunicable nature, but is augmented and furthered by our participation, while his joys are quickened and redoubled by the joint wiſhes of others: this is that bleſſed ſtate of mind which is ſo excellently called ſingleneſs of heart; which inſeparable peace and happineſs, it is not in the power of all the tinſel in the world to diſcompoſe; for to a chriſtian and knowing mind earth is but earth, though the refined dirt ſhine into gems, and gliſter into gold.

He that thus juſtly values the wealth which heaven has beſtowed upon him, cannot grow giddy in the poſſeſſion of it, for it ſerves only to expreſs a noble and chriſtian nature, which diſpenſes liberally, and enjoys abſtinently the goods which he knows he may loſe and muſt leave: but this extenſive magnanimity, according to the rules of our faith, is not to be beſtowed on thoſe only who are our friends, but muſt reach alſo to our very enemies; though good ſenſe as well as religion is ſo utterly baniſhed the world, that men glory in their very paſſions, and purſue trifles with the utmoſt vengeance, ſo little

do they know that to forgive is the moſt arduous pitch human nature can arrive at; a coward has often fought, a coward has often conquered, but a coward never forgave. The power of doing that flows from a ſtrength of ſoul conſcious of its own force, whence it draws a certain ſafety which its enemy is not of conſideration enough to interrupt; for it is peculiar in the make of a brave man to have his friends ſeem much above him, his enemies much below him.

Yet though the neglect of our enemies may ſo intenſe a forgiveneſs, as the love of them is not to be in the leaſt accounted for by the force of conſtitution, but it is a more ſpiritual and refined moral introduced by him, who died for thoſe that perſecuted him, yet very juſtly delivered to us, when we conſider ourſelves as offenders, and to be forgiven on the reaſonable terms of forgiving; for who can aſk what he will not beſtow? eſpecially when that gift is attended with a redemption from the crueleſt ſlavery to the moſt acceptable freedom: for when the mind is in the contemplation of revenge, all its thoughts muſt ſurely be tortured with the alternate pangs of rancour, envy, hatred, and indignation: and they who profeſs a ſweet in the enjoyment of it, certainly never felt the conſummate bliſs of reconciliation: at ſuch an inſtant the falſe ideas we received unravel, and the ſhyneſs, the diſtruſt, the ſecret ſcorns, and all the baſe ſatisfactions men had in each others faults and misfortunes, are diſpelled, and their ſouls appear in their native whiteneſs, without the leaſt ſtreak of that malice or diſtaſte which ſullied them: and perhaps thoſe very actions, which (when we looked at them in the oblique glance with which hatred doth always

always ſee things) were horrid and odious; when obſerved with honeſt and open eyes, are beauteous and ornamental.

But if men are averſe to us in the moſt violent degree, and we can never bring them to an amicable temper, then indeed we are to exert an obſtinate oppoſition to them, and never let the malice of our enemies have ſo effectual an advantage over us, as to eſcape our good will: for the neglected and deſpiſed tenets of religion are ſo generous, and in ſo tranſcendent and heroic a manner diſpoſed for public good, that it is not in a man's power to avoid their influence; for the chriſtian is as much inclined to your ſervice when your enemy, as the moral man when your friend.

Now ſince the dictates of chriſtianity are thus excellently ſuited to an enlarged love and ambition to ſerve the world, the moſt immediate method of ſeeing to what height they would accompliſh that noble work, is taking the liberty of obſerving how they would naturally influence the actions and paſſions of ſuch perſons, as have power to exert all the dictates and impulſes which are inſpired, either by their inclinations or opinions; for whatever is acted in the narrow path of a private life, paſſes away in the ſame obſcurity that it was performed in; while the purpoſes and conduct of princes attract all eyes, and employ all tongues; in which difficult ſtation and character it is not poſſible, but that a man without religion muſt be more exquiſitely happy, than the meaneſt of his vaſſals; for the repeated pomp and pageantry of greatneſs muſt needs become in time either languid in the ſatisfactions they give, or turn the heads of the powerful, ſo that it is abſolutely neceſ-

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ſary that he ſhould have ſomething of more inward and deep regard, to keep his condition from being an oppreſſion, either to himſelf or others.

There were not ever before the entrance of the chriſtian name into the world, men who have maintained a more renowned carriage than the two great rivals who poſſeſs the full fame of the preſent age, and will be the theme and examination of the future: they are exactly formed by nature for thoſe ends, to which heaven ſeems to have ſent them amongſt us: both animated with a reſtleſs deſire of glory, but purſue it by different means, and with different motives: to one it conſiſts in an extenſive undiſputed empire over his ſubjects, to the other in their rational and voluntary obedience: one's happineſs is founded in their want of power, the others in their want of deſire, to oppoſe him: the one enjoys a ſummer of fortune, with the luxury of a Perſian, the other with the moderation of a Spartan; one is made to oppreſs, the other to relieve the oppreſſed: the one is ſatisfied with the pomp and oſtentation of power to prefer and debaſe his inferiors, the other delighted only with the cauſe and foundation of it, to cheriſh and protect them: to one therefore religion is but a convenient diſguiſe, to the other a vigorous motive of action.

For without ſuch ties of real and ſolid honour, there is no way of forming a monarch, but after the Machiavilian ſcheme, by which a prince muſt ever ſeem to have all virtues, but really to be maſter of none, but it is to be liberal, merciful and juſt, only as they ſerve his intereſts; while with the noble art of hypocriſy, empire would be to be extended, and new conqueſts be made by new devices, by which prompt

prompt addreſs his creatures might inſenſibly give law in the buſineſs of life by leading men in the entertainment of it, and making their great monarch the fountain of all that is delicate and refined, and his court the model for opinions in pleaſure, as well as the pattern in dreſs; which might prevail ſo far upon an undiſcerning world as (to accompliſh it for its approaching ſlavery) to make it receive a ſuperfluous babble for an univerſal language.

Thus when words and ſhow are apt to paſs for the ſubſtantial things we are only to expreſs, there would need no more to enſlave a country but to adorn a court; for while every man's vanity makes him believe himſelf capable of becoming luxury, enjoyments are a ready bait for ſufferings, and the hopes of preferment invitations to ſervitude, which ſlavery would be coloured with all the agreements, as they call it, imaginable: the nobleſt arts and artiſts, the fineſt pens and moſt elegant minds, jointly employed to ſet it off, with the various embelliſhments of ſumptuous entertainments, charming aſſemblies and poliſhed diſcourſes: and thoſe apoſtate abilities of men, the adored monarch might profuſedly and ſkilfully encourage, while they flatter his virtue, and gild his vice at ſo high a rate, that he, without ſcorn of the one, or love of the other, would alternately and occaſionally uſe both, ſo that his bounty ſhould ſupport him in his rapines, his mercy in his cruelties.

Nor is it to give things a more ſevere look than is natural, to ſuppoſe ſuch muſt be the conſequences of a prince's having no other purſuit than that of his own glory; for if we conſider an infant born into the world, and beholding itſelf the mightieſt thing in it, itſelf the preſent admiration and future proſpect of

of a fawning people, who profeſs themſelves great or mean according to the figure he is to make amongſt them, what fancy would not be debauched to believe they were but what they profeſſed themſelves, his mere creatures, and uſe them as ſuch, by purchaſing with their lives a boundleſs renown, which he, for want of a more juſt proſpect, would place in the number of ſlaves, and the extent of his territories; ſuch undoubtedly would be the tragical effects of a prince's living with no religion, which are not to be ſurpaſſed but by his having a falſe one.

If ambition were ſpirited with zeal, what would follow, but that his people ſhould be converted into an army, whoſe ſwords can make right in power, and ſolve controverſy in belief; and if men ſhould be ſtiff-necked to the doctrine of that viſible church, let them be contented with an oar and a chain in the midſt of ſtripes and anguiſh, to contemplate on him, whoſe yoke is eaſy, and whoſe burthen is light.

With a tyranny begun on his own ſubjects, and indignation that others draw their breath independent of his frown or ſmile, why ſhould he not proceed to the ſeizure of the world; and if nothing but the thirſt of ſway were the motive of his actions, why ſhould treaties be other than mere words, or ſolemn national compacts be any thing but an halt in the march of that army, who are never to lay down their arms, till all men are reduced to the neceſſity of hanging their lives on his way-ward will; who might ſupinely, and at leiſure, expiate his own ſins by other mens ſufferings; while he daily meditates new ſlaughter, and new conqueſt.

For

For mere man when giddy with unbridled power is an inſatiated idol not to be appeaſed with myriads offered to his pride, which may be puffed up by the adulation of a baſe and proſtrate world, into an opinion that he is ſomething more than human, by being ſomething leſs: and alas, what is there that mortal man will not believe of himſelf when complimented with the attributes of God? He can then conceive thoughts of a power as omnipreſent as his: but ſhould there be ſuch a foe of mankind now upon earth, have our ſins ſo far provoked heaven, that we are left utterly naked to his fury? Is there no power, no leader, no genius that can conduct and animate us to our death or our defence? Yes, our great God never gave one to reign by his permiſſion, but he gave to another alſo, to reign by his grace.

All the circumſtances of the illuſtrious life of our prince ſeem to have conſpired to make him the check and bridle of tyranny, for his mind has been ſtrengthened and confirmed by one continued ſtruggle, and heaven has educated him by adverſity to a quick ſenſe of the diſtreſſes and miſeries of mankind which he was born to redreſs: in juſt ſcorn of the trivial glories and light oſtentations of power, that glorious inſtrument of providence, moves like that in a ſteady, calm, and ſilent courſe, independent either of applauſe or of calumny, which renders him if not in a political, yet in a moral, a philoſophic, an heroic, and a chriſtian ſenſe, an abſolute monarch; who, ſatisfied with this unchangeable juſt and ample glory, muſt needs turn all his regards from himſelf to the ſervice of others; for he begins his enterpriſes with his own ſhare in the ſucceſs of them, for integrity

bears in itſelf its reward, nor can that which depends not on event, ever know diſappointment.

With the undoubted character of a glorious captain, and, what he much more values than the moſt ſplendid titles, that of a ſincere and honeſt man, he is the hope and ſtay of Europe, an univerſal good not to be engroſſed by us only; for diſtant potentates emplore his friendſhip, and injured empires court his aſſiſtance: he rules the world not by an invaſion of the people of the earth, but the addreſs of its princes; and if that world ſhould be again rouſed from the repoſe which his prevailing arms have given it, why ſhould we not believe that the Almighty, by whoſe influence the terrible enemy that thinks himſelf prepared for battle, may find he is but ripe for deſtruction, and that there may be in the womb of time great incidents, which may make the cataſtrophe of a proſperous life as unfortunate, as the particular ſcenes of it were ſucceſsful.

For there does not want a ſkilful eye, and reſolute arm, to obſerve and graſp the occaſion; a prince who, from a juſt notion of his duty to that being to whom he muſt be accountable, has, in the ſervice of his fellow-creatures, a noble contempt of pleaſures, and patience of labours, to whom it is hereditary to be the guardian and aſſerter of the native rights and liberties of mankind; and who, with a rational ambition, knows how much greater it is to give than take away; whoſe every day is productive of ſome great action, in behalf of mens univerſal liberty; which great affection to them it is not in the power of their murmurs to interrupt his toil any more than their dreams, his vigilence; a prince who never did or ſpoke any thing that could juſtly give grief to his people

people, but when he mentioned his ſucceſſion to them: but what grateful mind can bear that inſupportable reflection? No, we will with endleſs adoration implore heaven to continue him to us, or expire in heaps before his pavilion, to guard his important life, and in the joint cauſe of heaven and earth, our religion and our liberty deſtroy like miniſtring angels, or die an army of martyrs.

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